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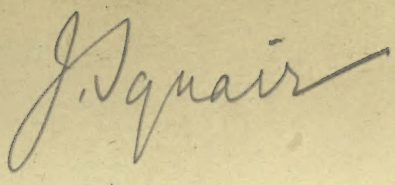

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF A HIGHLAND PARISH.

THE

NATURAL HISTORY

OF A

HIGHLAND PARISH

(ARDCLACH, NAIRNSHIRE).

By ROBERT THOMSON.

[NB. NOT Robert Boyd Thomson, 1870-1947]

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THE PRINCESS STONE.

INTRODUCTORY.

During the last few years of my schoolboy life, I and a companion, David Moir, became deeply interested in the truths of Astronomy as presented to us in our ordinary text-books. As the schoolmaster himself had a decided favour for this branch of science, he occasionally gave us a persual of an advanced work on this subject from his own library. In school he even allowed us to spend an hour or two daily in the practical application of the knowledge thus acquired. It was, therefore, with no small degree of pleasure mingled with some pride, that we devoted ourselves for a few months to the construction of large diagrams in colour, to illustrate the plan and various effects of the heavenly bodies. From an artistic point of view our productions were fairly creditable, and the foundation thus laid proved greatly helpful to me when extending my knowledge in this department.

After completing about a dozen sheets, we longed for a telescopic view of the orbs themselves, and cherished the hope of being considered real astronomers by our schoolfellows. Owing to the cost, a suitable instrument was hopelessly beyond the reach of our united means, and our parents, though indulgent above many, were neither able nor willing to gratify such an ambitious desire. As the result of long and careful consideration, we boldly resolved to attempt the

construction of a telescope for ourselves. Having each a mechanical turn of mind, we managed, with great care and at some little expense, to fit up a small turning-lathe at our respective homes, and were soon busy grinding lenses for our grand project. These were, of course, rather imperfect, and showed the same defects with which the early makers had to contend when they combined their handiwork for similar purposes. The greater their magnifying power the more they refracted the light of the celestial bodies, and tinged the margins with all the colours of the rainbow. By and bye, we ascertained that second-hand glasses could be had very cheap from a professional instrument-maker in Aberdeen, and accordingly we stopped grinding and replaced our own productions with articles in every respect more satisfactory. With a thirty-inch acromatic field glass, somewhat dimmed with mildew, and a half-inch eye piece, I saw the Rings of Saturn, Jupiter's Moons, and the Phases of Venus with some degree of complacency. The ordinary Man in the Moon, too, had to give place to mountains, valleys and plains all over the surface. On the 6th December 1882, I followed with great distinctness the Transit of Venus across the sun's disc, and enjoyed a sight which no one now living will ever see again.

Of the sixty-five British butterflies, from seventeen to twenty might be expected to occur in any one locality. With the exception of Pieris Brassica, they are all comparatively harmless. For this reason the country people entertain no feelings of hostility towards them, and generally they are great favourites wherever they occur. Among our natives, none are gaudy, but everyone is chaste and pretty. At first they appeared to me, as to the uninitiated, to be simply members of one great family, and only divided into septs according to their colours—red, white, blue, or dark brown.

To the former belongs the brilliant Little Copper (Chrysophanus Phlæas) so well known to everybody who takes a walk by the field or riverside. It was this insect which so much attracted my attention many, many years ago, that I decided to turn Entomologist. It is, indeed, a beautiful creature, for a more intimate acquaintance has only served to intensify my early admiration. By a succession of broods, it adorns the woods and moorlands for a great part of the year with its bright coppery-red wings, dotted here and there with black spots. During my first season I collected about a dozen species, and in order to identify them I procured a copy of Stainton's Manual of British Butterflies and Moths, but my progress in nomenclature was for some months rather slow.

Next year, 1857, I accepted a kind of *locum tenens* on the coast of Kincardine. During the summer months I was a frequent visitor to the seaside. Wandering about one day, net in hand, at the foot of the "heughs," I came across a pretty little butterfly with brown wings dotted with white in the centre. It was flitting about in considerable numbers over a grassy slope which ran down to the water's edge, and appeared to be very fond of resting from time to time on the flowers of the Rag Weed (Senecio Jacobœa). My find on that occasion was easily identified. According to Stainton's Manual the insect turned out to be Polyommatus Artaxerxes —a Northern species of very rare occurrence in this country. In the hope of obtaining a few Southern butterflies, by exchange, I sent a short paragraph to that effect to the Entomologist's weekly "Intelligencer." But the result was entirely beyond what I had expected. For more than a fortnight letters of inquiry and boxes containing insects in advance came pouring on me at the rate of about a dozen daily. In all, the number reaching me amounted to one

hundred and fifty, the great majority from clergymen of the Church of England and young entomologists whose note-paper bore monograms, crests or coats of arms. I was now on the horns of a dilemma—the commodity I offered was flying stock, and I had not in my possession even a leg or a wing for the various applicants. Well, in the circumstances I did my best, but that was not all I could have desired.

While this correspondence was going on, the local post-runner was making frequent inquiries at my neighbours as to what good luck had come the way of the young schoolmaster. Some said one thing, and some another, but all were convinced that I had fallen heir to a big fortune in some shape or other. None ever dreamed of the true explanation.

In 1858, I was appointed Free Church teacher in the parish of Cawdor. Among the natives, my place was known as the Culcharry School, after the name of the croft on which the buildings were erected. Having no idea of Gaelic at the time, the name grated rather unpleasantly on my ear, and I decided, on the suggestion of a London gentleman born in the district, to call my new home Viewhill. Accordingly this was the address which appeared after my name in the "List of British Entomologists" for the following year. In course of time a letter came to me one day from the Rev. Dr Gordon of Birnie, asking about some local insects. I replied, and the correspondence thus begun, continued intermittently until within a short time of his death. By and bye, the minister, in a letter to his friend Mr Stables, factor at Cawdor Castle, happened to mention my name as an authority on some point of local Natural History, and was informed that there was no such person or place in the parish. In reply, Dr Gordon stated that as he had received several letters from "Mr Thomson, Viewhill," it might be worth Lord Cawdor's while to

consider the propriety of appointing a factor somewhat better posted up in the details of his Lordship's estate! Mr Stables, who was a staunch adherent to the old Celtic place-names, was not a little puzzled; but, calling at the post office, he found that the mystery was easily enough explained there. Soon after, I received an invitation to dinner at the Castle and was offered every facility to consult his private collection of native plants and fossils, as circumstances might require. As the latter were entirely new and interesting to me, I lost no time in paying a visit to the limestone quarry at Lethen Bar. At that time the peculiar nodules were to be found on the surface in large numbers, and the first one which I opened showed as perfect a section of the curious Pterichthys cornutus as could be wished. The others contained fairly good specimens of Coccosteus decipiens and Osteolepis major.

For a time I devoted a good deal of attention to the Geology of the parish. The coarse Conglomerate in the Cawdor Burn interested me, and particularly that point below Glengoulie Bridge, where it is so admirably seen tilted up against the lower metamorphic rock. Conversing one day with a local farmer, he advised me to examine an old clay bank on the farm of Knockloam, where, he said, he had seen in his early years round stones very like those at Cairn Bar. I at once visited the spot and found they were still there. On communicating the fact to Mr Stables, he invited me to meet the Rev. Dr Gordon, Rev. Mr Joass and himself on the ground and hear what these gentlemen had to say on the subject. They were greatly interested in the discovery and settled that the deposit belonged to the same period as the one at Lethen Bar, although the contained fossils were less perfectly preserved than those on the higher level.

Soon after coming to Cawdor I gave up the idea of

attempting to form a British collection of insects and decided to make the local one as complete as possible. Owing to the variety and luxuriance of the food plants there, the field was particularly rich both in the Macro and Micro-Lepidoptera. In a few years my cabinet contained specimens of seventeen different Butterflies, and one hundred and sixty species of Moths belonging to the district. Most were common, many frequent, and a few so rare or irregular in appearance, that the Entomologist might be years before he was fortunate enough to capture any of them. For a long time, however, I calculated on finding, each succeeding season, at least one species as new to my collection. Of course there is a limit to such additions, and I think I have now pretty nearly reached it in Ardclach. In 1861, the Rev. Dr Gordon, published in the Zoologist his "List of Lepidoptera hitherto found within the Province of Moray," and he noticed in it some fifteen of my Cawdor insects as being pretty rare North of the Grampians.

My Ardclach "List" appeared in "The Annals of Scottish Natural History" for January 1894. The less common Butterflies recorded there are Argynnis aglaia, Pyrameus atalanta, P. cardui, and Anthocharis cardamines; while the following Moths would be fully valued in any cabinet:—Smerinthus populi, Orgyia coryli, Venilia maculata, Amphydasis betularia, Hybernia defoliaria, Anticlea derivata, Carsia imbutata, Acronycta leporina, Scopelosoma satellitia, and Anarta cordigera. The last species, as far as our Island is concerned, was supposed to occur only, and that but sparingly, on the Moor of Rannoch—the Paradise of the British Lepidoptera.

There is nothing rare or specially noteworthy among the Hymenoptera of Ardclach. The local species are well

represented in my drawers. A goodly number both of the Coleoptera and Diptera are also included, but having no access to the excessively dear standard works on British Entomology, I found their identification both difficult and tantalizingly uncertain. A few, however, have been correctly named, and from past experience I expect that the veil will by and bye be removed from some of the others also.

It was the heavenly blue of the pretty little viatical Speedwell, Veronica Chamaedrys, that first captivated my love for flowers and induced me to begin the study of Botany. Casually mentioning the fact to the minister's wife, who had given some attention to plants in her early days, I was delighted when she offered her Manual for the season. Only a few weeks after, however, the minister, to my surprise, asked if I was through with it as Mrs——liked to have it beside her for reference. Rather disheartened I returned the volume and wrote the Rev. Dr Gordon to recommend a suitable book for my purpose. He named Irvine's Hand-Book of British Plants, than which I doubt if there is a better popular work in the market even yet. Some time after, my friend remarked that there was an old Linnæan Botany in the manse which I might have if I was still prosecuting my studies. I declined with thanks and never again referred to the subject.

The Cawdor Wood, and especially the crannies along the burn, yield a large proportion of the different ferns which occur in Nairnshire. It was while searching about the banks of this stream during the summer of 1863 that I came across the single specimen which has ever since remained in my possession without a name. The root was taken down to the Cawdor greenhouse and under the care of Mr Maitland it continued to thrive for several years. The new fronds developed considerably in size, but on the whole, they very

decidedly retained their original individuality. I dried a frond from each season's growth for the three following years, and preserved them in the cabinet. It ought, I think, to take rank somewhere among the Lastreas.

It was during a short stay in Strathpeffer, in September 1867 that the late Mr Macnaughton and myself ascended, without map or guide, to the summit of Ben Wyvis. When about half-way up, we rested for a time with a local shepherd who gave us much valuable information regarding our movements on the mountain. Before parting, he gently tried to worm out our calling and status in society and inquired where we hailed from. "Nairnshire," was the somewhat indefinite reply. "O, that's the head county of Ross!"—referring, we thought, to a detached portion near Dingwall. "And what do you follow after on that side of the Firth?" said he. "Like yourself," rejoined my friend, "we take care of lambs." He paused for a little, and looking more or less incredulous, added "But they'll all be your own, I'm thinking?" I assured him that we were only servants, and that with the exception of half-a-dozen which belonged to my more wealthy companion, and a couple to myself, both flocks were the valued property of our respective masters. When we saw that he was preparing for a more minute analysis of our statements, we changed the subject, and bidding our friend farewell, continued the ascent and were soon on the summit. Within a few feet of the highest point, I found in a sheltered cranny, a curious plant, which has ever since remained in my cabinet an unnamed specimen. We saw no others of the same kind.

To the young botanist all was desolate and scorched, but the surface, on a nearer examination, presented a splendid field for even an average Bryologist. Moss and lichen in some of their rarest forms were everywhere abundant, and for

long stretches we walked over a stunted form of Bog Moss, Sphagnum acutifolium, as pleasantly as if we had been treading on the finest Brussels carpet. As the day was fine, except about half an hour, when we were enveloped in mist, we saw at one stretch from the German Ocean almost to the Atlantic, and on the other, from the Grampians, far over the hills of Sutherland and Caithness, and returned to the Spa the same evening tired, but not in anywise fatigued.

After making a good collection of the flowering plants found in Ardclach, I began to give some attention to the Mosses, but soon discovered, that although this family was remarkably beautiful and delicate in every particular, the study presented many difficulties which could only be overcome by minute observation, together with the use of a fairly powerful microscope. Throughout the district there was no lack of specimens. In the wood, on the moor, and by the wayside. they appeared at every step, yet my undoubted successes had been few, in comparison with the numerous species still to be examined and represented in my herbarium.

Having a student friend attending the botany class at one of the Universities, it occurred to me that through him I might obtain some corroborative aid in my early stage. Accordingly, two very common plants—a moss and a lichen—over whose identity there still hung a thin haze of obscurity, were posted to him, with the request that he would submit them to his professor, who, it was to be expected, would name them at a glance. This my friend did at the earliest opportunity. "That is Cladonia rangiferina," said the professor, without the least hesitancy; "but your moss; well I'm not able at this moment to say what it is; but as it happens to be in full fruit, the identification should be easy. Leave it with me, and look back again." Next day at the end

of his hour, the professor intimated that having an important engagement elsewhere, he was sorry he would have to hurry away as soon as possible. A week passed, and the student ventured to call at his private room, but found him so busy there writing a letter in order to catch the evening mail, that, as he said, he could not spare a moment for consultation! Henceforward, neither party referred to the subject. Nor did it much matter, for by the time the announcement reached me, the veil had been confidently pushed aside and the mystery solved.

As it is the unexpected, however, that often happens, so on the 15th May 1892, the postman handed me a letter addressed, "Mr Robert Thomson, Esquire, &c." With some degree of curiosity the seal was broken, and inside there was a lengthy communication from an unknown correspondent: a working man in Dundee. The writer had evidently only been nominally, if ever, at any school, and the contents took me some time to decipher. For Orthography and the rules of Syntax, he had very little respect, while his caligraphy was scrawling, irregular and defective.

He had recently written, he said, to a friend of mine in Inverness, asking if he cared to associate himself with an amateur naturalist, for the mutual study of the Mosses. But that gentleman, being fully occupied at the time with other subjects, replied that he was unable to accept his offer, and had recommended him to apply to me. On the face of it, I did not see very clearly where, in either case, the "mutual" was to come in, but being greatly interested in this science, and wishing to make as full a collection of the local species as possible, I concluded that "two heads would be better than one." In acknowledging his letter, I agreed, and by an early post, thereafter, despatched three or four mosses,

then under consideration on my table. By return, they came back duly classified, with their long Greek and Latin names all correctly spelt! This seemed rather strange, and it was not without some suspicion that his identification was put to the test. But on referring to a standard manual of British Bryology, there was no denying the accuracy of the nomenclature, as each agreed in the minutest detail with the relative technical description of their respective species.

For several years after, a very pleasant correspondence passed between us. Mosses and other Cryptogamia were freely exchanged, and more than once did the Ardclach field produce varieties which greatly interested my friend, while a splendid Sphagnum, from a pool on the Aitnoch moor, would have been esteemed a prize by any Bryologist in the land. It soon appeared that my correspondent was an enthusiast in this difficult branch of science, having personally gathered, and systematically arranged, fully three-fourths of the British natives. Occasionally, he did hesitate for a day or two over an immature specimen which had been pulled out of season, and consequently without the important capsules so necessary in settling its place among the other members of the same family. In no case, however, did he fail to name any moss or lichen submitted to him by me for that purpose. He appeared to be quite familiar with all technical terms usually employed by botanists, in their scientific descriptions of the Mosses, and curiously enough, never spelt them wrong. His letters were usually long; often amusing, but always full of practical information. The following is fairly typical of his numerous communications to me on his favourite subject:—

"DUNDEE, April 1892.

"Mr R. Thomson, i am Always quit Plesed to see you Honer the Humbl Mosses with good Pepper, but the Misscheaff of it

is you Almost Always fold them up rong So i would like to See you Just folding your Pakits Like all other Bryological Brethren. I am sertain Mr Thomson would Just Like to be Ship Styel in all his ways. Mr Thomson, i wish i were living beside you i know quite well you would hav far mor to Learn me than i could to you by a Thousand Miles. But then two Men on a Mountain, Hill or Glen Bent on the Sam Subject, would it not be Something Glorious & Grand. Pleese note this i am going to say. Dont Atemp to stik your Speciments all on Sheats of pepper—Because that would be of very little use for an after Examination, or a Cretical refrance at any time when required. By piking out a single plant out of a pakit and putting it into a Tea Saser with a spunful of Hot water it drives out the air from the sels in a minute or two which you could not do with a Flowring Plant at all. Supose a Moss plant be 8 or 10 years old you can revive it in a minute or 2 for the microscoap. Pleas look at the last pakit i sent you of Pilotrichum antipyreticum. i think i spelt the specific name "pir" with an i instead of y, now if i did so this is rong & you must corect it. we must be particklar as to the spelling the nams of the Mosses right.—Yours faithfully."

In the following pages, I have endeavoured to notice somewhat in detail, a variety of the more interesting plants and wild flowers, to be met with in Ardclach. From a long study of this fascinating science, I have derived not a little valuable, as well as curious information, and enjoyed in all my ramblings "O'er hill and dale and desert sod," a real pleasurable excitement unknown to any save the genuine lover of Nature. The display of endless modification and striking development, presented to the botanist's eye, are well fitted to fill the mind with wonder and admiration. Everywhere, do we meet with beneficent thought, plan, and skilful adaptation, combined with perfect harmony throughout the whole. At the same time, the study is as healthful and exhilarating for the body, as it is stimulating and pleasing for the mind. It induces the student to notice with accuracy and system, the various

distinctions and resemblances among Natural objects, and develops a healthy formation of orderly and studious habits in all the concerns of life. It braces the muscle, brightens the vision, and leads the soul by a most spiritualising education to realise, with clearer perceptions, the more immediate presence of the Unseen and Eternal. It can only be carried on successfully under the open canopy of heaven, while enjoying the pure fresh air and the delightful scenery, amid which the objects of our attention are to be found in their highest perfection. In their rural haunts, the study of plants is equally open to every rank and condition of life, for the

> "Flowers that spring by vale and stream,
> Each one may claim them for his own."

To them the landscape is largely indebted for that subtle charm which fascinates the young botanist and induces him to love Nature for her own intrinsic value.

From earliest boyhood, the outstanding tendency of my disposition led me to take a peculiar delight in the study of birds, insects and plants, as well as to give an open ear, as opportunities occurred, to those old-world stories so frequently related by the superstitious enthusiast at the rural cottage fireside. By and by, I began to record for my own information and amusement, the more striking facts or fancies held forth in connection with any particular subject; and, for many years, this exercise proved a copious source of gratification to at least my own mind. In this way a few local tales have been preserved, for, as we live in an age less indulgent of myth and tale than the bygone, they would almost certainly have passed with their narrators into oblivion, and been irretrievably lost. Of the legendary material contained in the following pages, it is very doubtful if even a small fraction could possibly be collected within the parish at the present

day. Occasionally, it was found necessary to modify a rough delineation with a slight dash of shade or colour, but in no case was this ever done so as to alter, or even obscure, the original picture.

My pupils often gave me most valuable assistance, both in Botany and Entomology. Not a season passed, in which they did not, from time to time, bring me some "strange beast," carefully wrapped up in a small box, now and then asserting that "Nobody ever saw one like it!" and hoping it might be something new. On examination, it was unquestionably true that every "beast" proved "strange" in a high degree, but I usually managed to convince the donors that, with careful search and watchfulness, others of the same family might be discovered in congenial retreats within the parish. More than once, however, they did find rare specimens which I myself never happened to come across. Professionally, my Natural History acquirements proved of the utmost service, in many ways to me, but especially in connection with Class Subjects and Elementary Science, in stimulating the children to intelligently observe, within their own environment, much that is surpassingly perfect and beautiful in Nature.

Though the placen-ames are both interesting and instructive, they are only such as might be expected to occur in a quiet pastoral district—none being either historical or transferred. With a few modern exceptions, the others are all the descriptive creations of the early settlers, and have been handed down to us from a remote antiquity. In most cases the average Gaelic scholar is still able to solve their meaning at a glance, but those which were so far corrupted as to present real difficulty, were submitted to several eminent Celtic Philologists, so that the various readings are believed to be as nearly correct as possible.

Here, I wish to acknowledge the frank and encouraging aid so cordially bestowed in every way by numerous friends, many of whom, alas! have now been "gathered to their fathers," in Cawdor, Ardclach and elsewhere. To Mr James Maitland, head gardener, Cawdor Castle, I am still very grateful for much pleasant botanical intercourse, experienced in former years. Possessing a wide and scientific acquaintance with the wild flowers, he stands, head and shoulders, above any of his other brethren with whom I ever came in contact. My best thanks are especially due to Alexander Sclanders, Esq., M.A., M.D., Nairn, who is well known as an excellent botanist, for the long and practical interest he was pleased to take in almost every subject which goes to make up this work. I am also greatly indebted to Percy Hall Grimshaw, Esq., of the Science and Art Museum, Edinburgh, for the able assistance he rendered to me in connection with my List of local Diptera. And not less am I obligated to the exertions of George Bain, Esq., Editor of the "Nairnshire Telegraph," by whose care and scholarly superintendence the "Natural History of a Highland Parish" has been arranged and brought into its present systematic shape.

R. T.

CHAPTER I.

SITUATED in Nairnshire, the parish of Ardclach contains an area of about eighty square miles. Raised on an average some five hundred feet above sea level, it produces on the higher elevations not a few plants whose natural habitat is in the region which lies not far removed from the lower confines of the snow limit. The general slope is toward the Moray Firth, with every here and there a pretty steeply inclined gradient as one proceeds from North to South. The surface is rough and undulating, and embraces large stretches of pasture and mossy lands.

Throughout these moorland tracts, there is little to disturb the traveller, save the whirr of the grouse, the frisp of the snipe, or the nervous wailing of the lapwing during the nesting season. The soil, in general, is intermingled to such an extent with small water-worn stones, that the name which the parish now bears was originally derived from a typical portion—Ardclach, meaning the Height of Stones.

By means of careful drainage and the application of sand and lime to the dark mossy products, large areas, formerly considered sour wastes, have been reclaimed for the benefit of the general community. For many years afterwards, these fields continued to yield excellent crops, and even now an important benefit is

being experienced in a more healthy local climate. The warmth of the summer sun, formerly lost in evaporating the water from the shallow pools, is now directly exercised in heating the drained soil, and warming the air which rests immediately above it.

All over the marshy districts, there is to be found a luxuriant growth of rushes, sedges, or other wild grasses. No sooner do the winter snows disappear, than these spots become aglow with the bright yellow Marsh Marigold (Caltha palustris), and its natural companions, the moisture loving Buttercups. A few weeks later, and the surface is prettily chequered with a snowy display of the tasselled silky Cotton Grass. In almost all the muddier hollows, there are large thickets of the Sweet Gale (Myrica gale). This is a very small willow-like shrub, the leaves of which emit a powerful odour especially after rain. It imparts not a little of those peculiarly pleasant and health-giving properties which characterise the mountain breezes, blowing across its favourite retreats.

Scattered irregularly over the undulating moorland, may be observed an occasional boulder of considerable size, dropt from some mighty glacier during the remote antiquity of the Glacial Period. Most are covered with light encrustations of grey lichens, intermixed at times with a specimen or two of the beautifully developed mossy tribes. "No words that I know of," to borrow the language of Mr Ruskin, "will tell what these forms are. None are delicate enough, none perfect enough, none rich enough. They will not be gathered like the flowers for chaplet or love token; but of these the wild bird will make its nest, and the wearied child its pillow. When all other service is vain, from plant and tree, the soft mosses and grey lichen take up their watch by the headstone. The woods, the blossoms, the grain-bearing grasses, have done their parts for a time, but these do service for ever. Trees for the builder's yard, flowers for the bride's chamber, corn for the granary, and moss for the grave. Strong in lowliness, they neither blanch in heat, nor pine in frost.

Sharing the stillness of the unimpassioned rock, they also share its endurance; and while the winds of departing Spring scatter the white hawthorn blossom like drifted snow, and Summer dims on the parched meadow the drooping of its cowslip gold—far above, among the mountains, the silver lichen spots rest, star-like, on the stone; and the gathering orange stain upon the edge of yonder peak reflects the sunset of a thousand years."

These varied patches are the means of relieving many a bold crag on the bleak hillside, and even converting it into an object of great beauty. Viewing such scenes, the botanist may truly be said to be a veritable possessor of the "second sight." Here, Enchanter like, he exercises an innate power and discovers a garden spreading itself over the surface of the rugged summits, where others only see a wilderness of bleak desolation. From these elevations the rain-water percolates down their sides, and collects in the lower depressions as dark mossy tarns, which again send out their peat-stained rills to mingle with the waters of the Findhorn or Meikle Burn.

In many parts, along the banks of these streams, the dark alder forms a very suitable skirting, while the general surface of the brown heath is ornamented with verdant groves of mountain fern, or relieved, in the lower district through the summer months, with the golden inflorescence of the Broom and Whin. The higher areas are interspersed with straggling birches, which, occasionally collecting into graceful clumps, diffuse a pleasing influence over the landscape. Especially is this the case when the sere and yellow Autumn comes slowly through the forest glades, or along the river margin gradually developing in the leaf that wonderful initial dissolution which mysteriously lights up the scene with such an indescribable charm.

Over the wide shallow declivities there is an extensive accumulation of peaty matter—a sort of very young unburied coal—often many feet in thickness. These mossy flats, with their deposits of both ancient and recent formation, have hitherto

yielded an important supply of valuable fuel to the inhabitants in the surrounding districts. While digging out the peat, one is frequently surprised at the number and freshness of the roots, occurring from time to time in the process. This is particularly noticeable on the Hill of Aitnoch—the highest elevation on the south-east side of the parish. The flat summit appears, from the stumps and roots still peeping up through the moss, to have been so thickly set with pine trees, that it must have been a matter of some difficulty for a stag, or even a fox, to have forced a passage among them. In general, these did not attain to any considerable size on account of the poor subsoil. Occasionally a specimen or two of black oak may be dug up, in favourable situations, rivaling in dimensions any of the larger denizens from the modern forests. There is sufficient evidence, however, from the charred surfaces, to conclude that fire must have been the grand agent employed for their general destruction. How and when, these virgin forests came under the power of the devouring element, is still a matter of speculation. Sometimes no doubt, the rude inhabitants lighted accidental fires. More frequently, they may have been kindled with the intention of either annoying an enemy or clearing the district of wild animals, with the result that the conflagration often spread far and wide beyond the power of any one either to control or subdue.

"Although cold are our hills and barren our moors," yet the agriculturist has taken possession of every available situation, and at great toil and considerable expense, has managed to bring large stretches under the influence of his fostering care. The parish is thus interspersed with a good many fairly sized holdings, from whose highly cultivated fields the farmer obtains, from year to year, an average yield of all the ordinary crops except wheat, which does not succeed at such an altitude.

One of the prettiest and best known botanical favourites reaches even to the higher elevations of the parish. It is the "Daisie" of Chaucer and the "wee, modest crimson tipped flower" of the

poet Burns, Should the season prove at all mild, it may be noticed in almost any month throughout the year. The Latin name—Bellis perennis—is fully as suggestive of beauty as its French synonym, Marguerite, meaning a pearl. In the age of chivalry, it occupied a prominent place among the Flora in general. St. Louis of France combined it and the Lily in a beautifully chaste device for his signet ring. Beholding in the daisy, a fit representation of his peerless Queen, he saw in the latter a characteristic emblem of the stainless virtue of his own country. Though establishing itself in almost every conceivable situation, it appears to manifest quite a strong attachment to man in all his wanderings over the temperate regions. During the summer months, it luxuriates in great profusion owing to the lightness of the soil on the upland meadows of Ardclach. The florets are so closely united on a common head that the group is almost invariably spoken of as a single flower. The outer row is unlike the rest, terminating as they do on the under side in a white flag or "ray."

A beautiful old Highland legend exists in reference to the daisy :—"The virgins of Morven, to soothe the grief of Malvina, who had lost her infant son, sung to her—'We have seen, O Malvina! we have seen the infant you regret reclining on a light mist; it approached us, and shed on our fields a harvest of new flowers. Look, O Malvina! among these flowers, we distinguish one with a golden disc, surrounded by silver leaves; a sweet tinge of crimson adorns its delicate rays; waved by a gentle wind, we might call it a little infant playing in a green meadow; and the flower of thy bosom has given a new flower to the hills of Cromla.' Since that day the daughters of Morven consecrated the daisy to infancy."

The Snowdrop (Galanthus nivalis) 'foremost of the lovely train,' is often a close companion of the daisy in many of the sacred spots throughout the country. As it is very doubtfully native, it is met with only apparently wild, in a few congenial situations

where it is almost certain that the bulbs were introduced by human agency. Thus, it grows in considerable abundance in the Lethen wood near the Mansion House, but in all likelihood both it and the companion Daffodil are only survivals of the old Castle garden. Its presence in the early Spring, while the icicles are yet pendant on the houses, is welcomed by all as an emblem of consolation, and atones, in great measure, for the long dearth of floral ornamentation during the foregoing months. The perianth, inclosing six stamens, is a bell-shaped flower which rises from a true bulb on a single leafless stem, between a pair of pale green parallel veined leaves. In this last respect the Snowdrop exhibits a good specimen of the characteristics of one of the great divisions of the Vegetable Kingdom which includes, among many others, the palms and grasses of so great importance to mankind. Both its scientific names are very descriptive, Galanthus being two Greek words meaning "milk-flower", while nivalis is the Latin for snowy There is an old belief that the Snowdrop should be in flower on the second of February. In the Highlands this seldom happens. In Ardclach, however, we noticed it in full bloom on that date in 1889. The idea originated with some of the early conventual botanists who tried to construct a floral calendar for each day of the year, and dedicated this hardy firstling to the Virgin Mary on their Feast of Candlemas.

In friendly companionship, here and there over the Lethen wood, there are numbers of the Lesser Periwinkle (Vinca minor) in flower about the same time. Notice the bright leathery leaves of the trailing stems with their handsome blue flowers, and it ought to be at once recognised.

The Henbit, or Dead Nettle, (Lamium purpureum), is a very common weed in every garden, and like the daisy, may be found in flower almost throughout the year. It offers a good example of the Labiate Order, so called from the form of the corolla, which presents the appearance of an under lip, but the leaves are devoid of any poisoned hairs. The stem is square instead of round, as

in the real stinging nettle. Several of the species present the anomaly of being able to produce fertile seed, even before the plants appear to reach maturity. They are often in fruit by the time the petals are fully expanded. No wonder that the old farmers believed in the doctrine of spontaneous generation. The well known "Dai Nettle" (Galeopsis Tetrahit) of Nairn, so much dreaded by labourers in the harvest field, is a near relative and equally abundant.

During the first two months of the year, the flowering plants are rather scarce, because they refuse to expose their beautiful and delicate forms to the keen severities of the nipping frosts. Gradually, however, as the days begin to lengthen, "The earth becomes an emerald, and the heaven a sapphire bright," thus indicating that summer is close at hand, when the "busy hum of insect crowds, all full of life and joy," assures us that animated Nature is again reviving from the Arctic conditions of a cheerless winter.

A very conspicuous March wild flower is the Colts' Foot (Tussilago farfara), or "The Son before the Father," as it is called by the local herbalists. Although plentiful in many parts, it does not succeed very well in Ardclach, but a few dwarfed specimens may be met with from time to time, along the larger water courses. The yellow composite flowers are very showy, and often mistaken for those of the Dandelion. They are quickly followed by the downy seeds, so much prized by the Goldfinch, and as cunningly used in its elegant little nest. As the flowers die away, the leaves begin to show themselves, carpeting the ground with their large woolly heart-shaped foliage, and if the crop be not carefully cut down, it may soon come, in favourable situations, to occupy more ground than the owner quite cares to bestow upon it.

As implied by the name "tussis," it was formerly much extolled as a "cough" medicine, with at least one virtue—it did but little harm. The leaves have been, and possibly still are, largely used as a British adulteration of tobacco. Indeed, when some of us were boys and unable to stand the strength of the pure "weed"

itself, we have, on the quiet, tried to smoke the dried Tussilago, by way of showing off our little manliness among our admiring compeers. The name was given to the plant from the shape of the leaf which was supposed to bear some resemblance to a colt's foot.

A cousin german, often referred to as "The Sunflower of the Spring," is the well known Dandelion (Leontodon taraxacum), which may be found continuously in flower from March to October. It is a very common wayside plant, and, were it not for this circumstance, might be considered pretty, from the gaudy blossoms and the white plumed seed heads which succeed them. Most people are ready to admit that we have lost a goodly number of native wildlings as the result of tillage, but few, who have not gone into the subject, have any idea how many of the existing Flora would be lost, were the surface again left undisturbed by man and the lower animals. According to Sir J. D. Hooker, "Both the common form of the Dandelion, and the Shepherd's Purse, which are almost exclusively confined to cultivation, would be among the first of many to be suppressed." When the seed has become fully ripe, it is dispersed by means of a beautifully constructed downy appendage, known to botanists as the pappus. A more skilfully arranged contrivance to effect the purpose intended, is scarcely conceivable. How often may we witness the weary cow-herd applying to its matured seed head, and improvising it as a would-be timepiece, in order to ascertain the tardy flight of the long summer hours according to the number of puffs which has to be applied with the mouth before the receptacle is completely cleared and the hour of day thereby indicated; thus, puff, one o'clock; puff, two o'clock, and so on as in the rhyme:—

"Dandelion, with head of down, the cow-herd's clock on every town (farm)
Which the laggard puffs amain, to conjure lost hours back again."

From the dotted impressions left on the naked disc, fringed with its edging of reflexed sepals, they are sometimes known to school

girls as their dolls' pincushions. The root has long been acknowledged by medical men to be possessed of the most valuable curative properties, but as it is procurable almost anywhere, and without the least expense, the popular mind has failed to recognise its sovereign virtues. The honey secreted in the nectaries is so plentiful, and so easily accessible, that it is nearly continuously visited by various insects which help materially in crossing its vital organs. In addition to this fact, its bright colour, the habit of closing in unfavourable weather, as well as the power of self-fertilization, go far to explain the great profusion in which it occurs.

Very likely the eye may be attracted by the clear blue of a small flower, often almost hidden from view by the thick herbage among which it loves to creep. This is the Ground Ivy (Glechoma hederacea),—the sole representative of its genus in this country. It may be readily known by the procumbent trailing stems, which bear reniform, crenate leaves, with auxillary labiate flowers. It is pretty abundant in Ardclach, upon the shady flats along the riverside. When carefully dried, it forms a splendid specimen for the herbarium.

Every now and then, on the driest and lightest spots, one is pretty sure to come across the small white-flowered Whitlow Grass (Draba verna), faintly starring, especially in sunshine, the surface with its rosaceous root leaves, crowned on short stems with the tiny cross-like petals.

By the end of March, the willows at the riverside gradually begin to put out their sexual flowers—reminding us that the severities of winter are fast passing away, and that a milder season is approaching. A little later on, the pendulous catkins become aglow with a golden radiance, and when fully ripe, shed down showers of pollen on all around. The humble bee may now be seen issuing forth with joyous hum, from a long seclusion in her winter retreat, to obtain upon the willows a scanty supply of "bread and honey" as her first-fruits, at the same time relying on

the assurance of better times and richer stores in the early future. A principle known as Salicine exists in the bark, and when extracted forms a valuable tonic in intermittent fevers. It is sometimes used as a substitute for quinine.

The Cotton Grass (Eriophorum angustifolium) is one of the first which comes into flower, but the Summer will be well advanced before the fleecy heads of woolly cotton constitute such a beautiful ornament all over the mossy flats.

The Aspen, or Trembling Poplar (Populus tremula) is generally wild in Ardclach. There is, however, a small grove, in a rich hollow on the Findhorn, near Glenferness, where the trees have grown to a great height—the pale spectre-like appearance of the trunks forming a very striking object as one unexpectedly approaches them from either direction. The peculiar tremulous motion of its foliage is caused by the great length of the compressed leaf-stalks—the least breeze being sufficient to keep them quivering. There was an old superstition here that the Cross was made from the wood of this tree, and that it has never been allowed to rest in consequence of that dreadful circumstance. A shrewd lady writer on this subject, however, notices that this calamity can scarcely apply to the leaves, as the Cross could not have been constructed from them; but, perhaps, she naively adds, "They struggle to escape from the wicked wood on which they grow." Every one knows the proverb—"Trembling like an Aspen leaf." The poet Thomson refers to the occasional still of the Aspen's leaves during the breathless hush which sometimes precedes a shower of rain :—

> "Gradual sinks the breeze
> Into a perfect calm; that not a breath
> Is heard to quiver through the closing wood,
> Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves
> Of Aspen tall."

The very name of April indicates that, in spite of the chilly breezes, alternating with sunshine and shower, which accompany this month, there are now buds and blossoms, bells and flowerets anew, to embarrass even the most ardent botanist who loves to

wander among the "pomp of groves and garniture of fields." From its appearance and delightful odour, the Common Primrose (Primula vulgaris)—"Eldest daughter of the Spring,"—occupies a foremost place. The name does not signify the first rose of Spring, as is often asserted. The old form used by Chaucer is primerole, which is an abbreviation through the French of the Italian prima verola, the diminutive of prima vera, the full phrase being *fior di prima vera*, or the Flower of the Early Spring. It may be found abundantly on the sunny banks along the Findhorn, as well as the grassy slopes of its tributary burns, and is a great local favourite. The salver-shaped corolla, of a yellowish white, rises upon a single flowered stalk, through a bushy rosette of wrinkled green leaves. Although the petals are rather pleasant to the taste, no grazing animal, except the pig, will touch the rough foilage of the Primrose. Owing to their soft delicacy and fine colours of almost every shade except blue, the Primula family has been cultivated as garden favourites from the earliest times. This little "nurseling of the Spring" bids fair to become a historical flower.

Gleaming unobtrusively on every bank and roadside, "Sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes," even the least observant can scarcely fail, during the early Summer months, to notice the delicate blue of the hardy little Dog Violet (Viola canina). Of the nine British species, Ardclach produces four. Viola arvensis is plentiful in cultivated fields, and may be easily known by its small faint yellow corolla, which is rarely tinged with light purple. Farmers generally rank it among their weeds. The Marsh Violet (V. palustris), often mistaken for its brighter sister, the Dog Violet, occurs in turfy bogs not unfrequently in the Glenferness woods. The Mountain Pansy (V. lutea), is usually abundant on the grassy pastures. The flowers are rather peculiar, and vary from purple, with a yellow spot at the base of the lower and lateral petals. Occasionally, specimens occur which show a tendency to run completely into the normal yellow which confers

the name, but the colour is, in general, so distinctly purple that the young botanist is sure to conclude that, be the specimens what they may, they cannot be those of the Yellow Pansy. It was the favourite flower of the great Napoleon.

The elegant little Wind Flower (Anemone nemorosa) may be found in great profusion in many a sheltered hollow throughout the parish. Its white corollas, externally tinged with a slight dash of pink, rise upon a single stalk which produces three deeply-cut leaves of about equal size, and at a distance more or less remote from the flower. In their season, they form good natural barometers, indicating, as they invariably do, the approach of a shower, by curling over their slender petals in a curtain-like fashion so as to protect the tender organs from the dew and wet—

> "Come tell me, thou coy little flower,
> Converging thy petals again,
> Who gave thee the magical power
> Of shutting thy cup on the rain?"

The Lesser Celandine (Ranunculus ficaria) grows abundantly on the island round Lochindorbh Castle, and occurs in several isolated spots along the Findhorn, and elsewhere over the parish. By the non-botanical eye, it is often mistaken for a buttercup. In addition to its yellow star-like blossoms, which delight in the open sunshine, it may be easily recognised by the smooth, bright green, heart-shaped leaves, and the bunch of elongated tubers attached to the root. The poet Wordsworth in writing of this wilding, says :—

> "There is a flower, the Lesser Celandine,
> That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain,
> But the first moment that the sun doth shine
> Bright as the sun himself is out again."

The numerous tubercles adhering to the root, lie so near the surface that they are sometimes washed bare, and even detached by a violent thunder shower, thus giving rise to an early popular idea, that it had rained wheat. A careful examination, however, by the botanist, showed the matter in its true light.

The name itself is interesting. It is derived from the Greek

word for a swallow, because, by means of its virtues, these birds were reputed to strengthen the defective eye-sight of their young ones, if it chanced to be impaired in any way before they were old enough to leave the nest.

In not a few of the drier spots under the crags along the river-side considerable thickets of the Sloe or Black Thorn (Prunus spinosa) are to be met with. Most people know that the straight shoots form splendid walking-sticks—the knotty projections on which greatly helping to give an additional pretty effect. The famous "shilelagh" of Ireland should, in all cases, be a branch from the Black Thorn. Care, we may remark, ought to be exercised in cutting one, lest any of the spines inadvertently pierce the hand and produce a rather troublesome wound. This shrub belongs to the Almond Family, and is supposed to be the original of all our plums and green gages, only highly developed through a long course of careful cultivation. It usually comes into blossom, while the cold "black winds of March" are at their keenest, the white flowers on the leafless stems having a very cheering effect among the surrounding vegetation. To this the poet alludes in the following beautiful lines :—

"The hope, in dreams of a happier hour,
That alights on misery's brow,
Springs out of the silvery almond flower
That blooms on a leafless bough."

The dried leaves were at one time employed in the adulteration of tea, and although the article thus blended has, rather jocularly been named "slow poison," the infusion is said to be equally wholesome, if not quite as stimulating as that of the genuine Indian production itself.

In favourable situations, the Crowberry (Empetrum nigrum) comes into flower about the end of April. It grows sparingly even to the highest summits over the parish. Locally, the fruit is known as "Croupans," and the slender wiry branches, set with imperfect whorls of heath-like evergreen leaves, trail on the ground and assume a redish hue as they become old. Their

structure is not a little curious. By the revolute folding of their edges towards the midrib, they form peculiar hollow cylinders. The small scarious flowers tend to become "everlasting," while the berry, esteemed only by the youthful palate, is glossy black, and produced in small clusters round the stem. Grouse and other moor fowl find in it a very pleasant variety to their usual fare. When boiled with alum, it was said to have afforded a good purple dye, serviceable to our forefathers for home use.

A very conspicuous member of the wet meadows or spongy burnsides, is the showy Marsh Marigold (Caltha palustris) with its characteristic reniform shining leaves. By some it is known as the Bull's Eye, which is no doubt a corruption of Pool's Eye. Others again call it the Drunkard, from the excess of water it is able, in a short time, to absorb and pass through its system. The usual corolla has been suppressed, but the intense yellow colouring of the calyx makes ample atonement, and the loss, to the ordinary eye, is seldom apparent. When the fruit is matured, the follicle or seed vessel, differing from the usual pod, splits along the upper edge for the dispersion of its peas. It partakes, to a considerable degree, of the acridity common to the Order, and the partially developed flower-buds, preserved in vinegar and salt, are reputed to be good substitutes for capers.

The moist heathy ground is the favourite abode of the Common Lousewort (Pedicularis sylvatica). Both this one and the sister species are rather solitary in their habits, being seldom found even in small clusters. As the former continues in flower for fully five months, there can be but little difficulty experienced in coming across a specimen for examination. The latter, (palustris), does not appear until after mid-summer, but it is equally common in Ardclach. They may be readily known by their bushy habit, the much divided leaves, their angular stems, and the technical rose-coloured, two-lipped flowers. These plants are not much esteemed by shepherds, but the early belief that they produced, as the name implies, the parasitical disease to

which the woolly race is liable, is a fancy now proved to be purely imaginary.

Two spring flowers are great favourites among boys and girls on account of the undoubted evidence afforded to them by the yellow impression reflected from the bright petals so distinctly on the chin, when held about an inch therefrom, that some particular playmate "is fond of butter." These are the Meadow and Creeping Butter Cups, (Ranunculus acris, and R. repens). They become so numerous at times that whole fields are distinctly tinted with their presence—they insist on being seen whether we will or not. Both are very troublesome weeds, and as such are well known to farmers and gardeners. In general they are avoided by cattle, although sheep and goats are said to feed on them sparingly. The double variety is referred to in the vernacular as "Bachelors' Buttons." Ranunculus bulbosus may be readily distinguished by the reflexed sepals and swollen root, while its half aquatic sister, the Lesser Spearwort (R. Flammula) with its narrow smooth leaves, must be sought for in ditches or similar spongy bogs. Another pretty member is the subalpine Globe Flower (Trollius Europæus) which grows occasionally by the riverside. It is the "bonny Lucken Gowan" of Hogg's beautiful sonnet, and is sure to attract attention from the incurved petals forming an almost perfect yellow globe about the size of a boy's marble. This is the flower of which he sings:—

> "When the Blewart bears a pearl,
> And the Daisy turns a pea,
> And the bonnie Lucken Gowan
> Has fauldit up her e'e."

By the end of April the forest trees are all in bud and blossom. Though less attractive to the ordinary eye, they are more imposing and useful to mankind in general than the

> "Beautiful children of the glen and dell—
> The dingle deep; the moorland stretching wide,
> And of the mossy fountain's sedgy side,"

which we have just been considering. Compared with the herbal sisterhood, they are, no doubt, sombre and dull, but at the same

time possessed of a peculiar beauty, which is both interesting and instructive to the earnest student of Natural History. The Ash and the Birch, the Chestnut and the Oak, are now in full bloom. But, with the exception of the first, they each bear their fertile, though obscure flowers, on one part, and the pendulous male catkins on another. The romantic beauty of a birch glade, when in the full strength of its inflorescence, is exceedingly characteristic and appropriate. In any situation its presence is felt as adding a charm to the scene with its light transparent form waving in the gentle breeze, and quivering against the sky, but nowhere can the impressive elegance of its gracefully drooping tassels be more strikingly witnessed than among the corries and tributary glenlets along our own finely wooded Findhorn.

CHAPTER II.

"Hence let us haste into the mid-wood shade,
Where scarce a Sunbeam wanders through the gloom ;
And on the dark green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream, that by the roots of oak
Rolls o'er the rocky channel, lie at large,
And view the glories of the circling year."

The fresh outburst into new life and beauty with which Nature is marked at the commencement of summer, instinctively stimulates in every one feelings of gladness and sincere welcome. With the advent of "the merry May" we are all brought more emphatically into contact with the distant valleys, full to the brim and overflowing with radiant light from the cloudless skies, and the softer melodies of the gurgling brooks, leaping from the surrounding hills in pursuit of their mazy path to the neighbouring river. Stimulated by the milder breezes, flower and foliage will soon shoot forth robed in splendour to adorn both shrub and tree, as well as to scatter golden cups and purple bells o'er every meadow, woodland, or brown hill side. In due course, the early morn steals slowly over the mountain tops, embalmed with the odour of countless blossoms rendered still more sweet from their dewy baptism of the night. The contrast which is so palpable between this and the foregoing months, no doubt

originated that intense interest in the young May, which incited the ancient Romans to do it homage in the annual observance of their Floralia, and the people of England to celebrate the same occasion in rural mirth and social enjoyment. And now we begin with those plants which are bold enough to put out their blossoms and expose their beauty and delicacy to the chilling frosts so frequently experienced in the early spring.

The root of the Common Aconite, Monk's Hood, or Wolf's Bane, (Aconitum napellus), as it is variously called, contains a most potent poison, so much so that 1-50th of a grain of aconitine will kill a sparrow in a few minutes. It has been, and is liable to be again, mistaken for horse radish, which it pretty much resembles, but may be readily distinguished, as it is destitute of the powerful smell which Aconite always emits. The root is also shorter, darker and more fibrous, and has been the cause of many accidental deaths. No caution, therefore, is too great when we have such terrible agents to deal with.

Altogether the species in this family number about a thousand, dispersed throughout most countries on the face of the globe. Few, if any, however can be said to be specially serviceable to man, except in so far as poisons are valuable when employed as medicines. All the domestic animals invariably reject them, and for a good reason too, as any one will find who may have the curiosity to chew even a small portion of the leaf. This acridity, which is their prevailing quality, disappears entirely after the plants have been dried. Should the bruised foliage be applied to the skin, it produces ugly blisters, and beggars, in some instances, are said to take advantage of this, and use poltices of the Celery-leaved Crowfoot (R. sceleratus) to raise sores, in order to stimulate compassionate benevolence more fully on their behalf.

It may be worth while to notice the essential characteristics of this Order. The carpels or female parts of the flower never combine, but remain quite distinct until they fall off; hence the fruit is said to be apocarpous, or non-adherent. The stamens or

male parts are inserted on the ends of the flower stalks, between the seeds and the corolla, and are thus hypogynous. If the student, therefore, meet with any new plants having these distinctive marks, no matter how different the general appearance, size, shape, or colour of the flower may be, still it is almost certain to be a Ranunculus, and ought to be carefully noted as such.

In the dry loamy spots which occur rather frequently along the river side, may be found a plant well known to our forefathers. From the appearance presented by the slender drooping umbels, some days before they display their tiny flowers, one might be ready to suppose that they had begun to decay. This is not the case. They will be erect enough as soon as the blossoms are fully developed. The plant is the Earth Nut (Bunium flexuosum), and a beautiful little specimen it is of the Order to which it belongs. Several fleshy tubers are produced on the common under-ground stems, and, in favourable situations, a few may be found even as large as a goose egg.

Among the early Saxons the Earth Nut was considered good for pigs only—hence the vulgar name. At a later period they were often eaten by the poorer peasantry, when the usual crops were under an average. The "nut" tastes pretty much like a turnip-radish, but it is to be feared that the relish for such delicacies is rather on the decrease even among the hungry herd-boys in the present day.

On the dry patches among the heather, or about the foundations of old walls, may be noticed one of the Pearlworts (Sagina procumbens), growing in dark green tufts, with the slender thread-like stems lying along the ground, and forked in the same manner as its near relative, the Common Chickweed or the "Hen's Inheritance" (Stellaria media). On very dry sunny spots this wildling sometimes produces no petals, and bears only five or three, instead of ten stamens. It may be always identified, however, by the peculiar line of hairs, which at each joint changes from one side to another, completing the circle of the stem at the

fourth time. The leaves give a striking example of the sleep of plants, closing up as they do on the young shoots at nightfall.

A beautiful representative of the Order is the Greater Stitchwort, or Fairy Flax (S. Holostea). It occurs frequently along the riverside, and especially so near the iron girder bridge at the Parish Church. No bouquet of wild flowers from Ardclach would be complete without a full share of its large, snowy, starlike blossoms occupying a prominent position therein. The sharply-pointed leaves and square stem, often kneeling among the grass, are sufficient characters for settling its individuality. Two of the trivial names by which it is sometimes known are Snap Stalks and Break Bones, from the ease with which the brittle joints crack and come asunder. A sister plant, the Lesser Stitchwort (S. graminea), much smaller in every way, but with very similar flowers is also occasionally to be met with in the parish.

By the end of May the roadsides are fully decked with the "darling Speedwell's heavenly blue." Few of Flora's fair ones are more ornamental than the Germander Speedwell (Veronica chamædrys), which is often, though erroneously, believed to be the true Forget-me-not. This is the natural gem among the wild flowers which first captivated the writer's fancy, and led him to study Botany as a science. A near relative, the Brooklime (V. Beccabunga), may from time to time be met with, starring the bottom of some sluggish stream with its chaste little blossoms which surpass in brilliancy even the delicate azure of its typical sister. The Veronicas form a pretty widely extended British genus, five of which, with the exception of the last, are to be found in great abundance all over the district. In attempting to form an aquaintance with the native species, settle the Germander and there should be no difficulty with the others. Observe how easily the flower, carrying with it the two stamens, falls off on the slightest friction, also the opposite cordate leaves, with the double row of hairs, alternating on the stem at each successive joint, and there can scarcely be any mistake.

Another popularly, though falsely allied tribe, is the Mouse Ears, so named from the form of their leaves. They claim

> "That blue and gentle floweret of the brook,
> Hopes gentle gem, the sweet Forget-me-not."

The Myosotis palustris has long been held in universal esteem, not only from the legend which confers the name, but more so for its own inherent beauty, as displayed in the pleasing blue reflected from its handsome little corolla. It is not only greatly admired by every one in its native retreats, but the leaves and blossoms are often portrayed upon our choicest ornaments to heighten the effect of an artificial beauty. Of the family to which it belongs, three delight to luxuriate in humid meadows, bogs and ditches, while five are to be met with on the drier areas of the moor and mountain side. The Myosotis is a beautiful and gregarious plant, and for many long years has been regarded as an emblem of the closest friendship and love—"A token flower that tells what words can never speak so well."

The Herb Robert (Geranium Robertianum), is rather common and should be looked at but little handled, because the whole plant leaves a somewhat disagreeable odour, resembling the smell of the fox, and said to be even vile enough to banish bugs. With its pink stem, small flowers, and deeply pinnate leaves, it makes a beautiful specimen for the herbarium. The way in which it spirally splits up its "cranesbill" when ripe is very pretty and forms a characteristic peculiar to the whole family. None of the species is in the least harmful, but their value is almost solely confined to their appearance as decorative plants when introduced to the garden or greenhouse. When found growing in exposed situations, "it often becomes all over red as blood." This condition, according to the mystical Doctrine of Signatures, was considered a true indication that it was intended by Providence as a sure remedy in cases of external and internal bleeding, as well as an unfailing cure for Erysipelas, or Rose, as it is called in the local vernacular. The origin of the name is rather uncertain, but

the weight of evidence seems to favour the idea that it was conferred in honour of Robin Hood, the celebrated English outlaw of Sherwood Forest.

Every one whose home is in the country knows the Wood Sorrel (Oxalis acetosella). It is the only British species, but is so abundant that it may be generally met with carpeting the woodlands and richer pastures, or sweetly nestling, it may be, at the base of some weather-beaten stone on the hillside. The pale green ternate leaves—the Birdies' Biscuits of schoolboy nomenclature—and the transparent fairy-like bells, composed of five lilac-veined white petals, are very attractive to the youthful fancy. The plant contains an agreeable flavouring of oxalic acid —the same as that found in the garden rhubarb. An infusion of the leaves is exceedingly refreshing to any one oppressed with a feverish thirst. This is one of our prettiest natives, and is by many supposed to be the real Shamrock of the Emerald Isle—the very wildling from which St. Patrick himself plucked a leaf, and exhibited it to his converts as a simple illustration of the doctrine of the Trinity. The story, however, is a late one, not being found in any of the earlier lives of the saint.

Most of the Trefoils exhibit the curious habit of regularly going off to sleep. When in this condition they may be observed with their leaves usually reflexed towards the stem. In the majority of cases, this strange predilection is the means adopted by Nature to protect the sensitive parts from the injurious effects of an extreme reduction of temperature, by radiation of heat into space during the night season. The leaflets of the Wood Sorrel respond very freely to the influence of light, and rise or fall according to the power of the sunbeams. It approaches the nearest of all the British species to a sensitive plant—not only closing its petals and drooping its bright green leaves at sunset, but with every unfavourable atmospheric change. But why they should adopt the recurved position—so different from the general plan—and expose the surface instead of the back

of the leaf, does not appear to be as yet very satisfactorily explained.

The chaste little Woodruff (Asperula odorata), is not very plentiful in Ardclach, but at the same time there need never be much difficulty in coming across a bed or two among the sheltered crannies along the Findhorn. When dry, the whole plant is delightfully fragrant, and retains its sweetness for many years, as well in the wardrobe as in the Herbarium—recalling to mind the pleasant odour of a hay-field. The old herbalists maintained that there was a charm, even in the name when spelt by a succession of double vowels and consonants, thus —W-oo-dd-r-oo-ff-e.

Another modest flower which loves to luxuriate among the low herbage in the same habitat, is the Wild Strawberry (Fragaria vesca). The small red fruit—the true ancestor of the queen of garden delicacies—can scarcely be missed during a stroll along the valley of the Findhorn about the end of June or beginning of July. The early appellation was very appropriately that of Earthberry, because the fruit rests on the ground. It was not, however, till some time after its artificial development that it occurred to the gardener that the "berry" would be better protected if the rows were lined with straw, and thus conferred the modern name.

Here too, in the character of a wild mountaineer, is to be found the Rowan, or Quicken Tree (Sorbus aucuparia). It never attains to a great size, but is airy, light, and adorned with the freshest foliage. The nearly erect branches bear large tufts of corymbose, cream-white flowers, but the period of its most attractive beauty is when these are succeeded by the glowing red berries with which every bough is laden in the following Autumn.

From the earliest times Rowan trees have been held in the highest veneration on account of their supposed magical properties, believed to contain a sovereign remedy against the subtlest spells of an all powerful and mysterious witchcraft. Less than a century

ago the following rhymes might have been heard in frequent use among rural peasants :—

"Rowan tree and red thread, put the witches to their speed."

Or,

"Keep Rowan tree and Woodbine, lest the witches should come in."

For this reason it was often planted near dwelling houses, and even far up in the mountain glens, its existence at the present day almost certainly marks the site of an old Highland Shieling. The Rowan wood was feared by every Evil Power, and that for a very good reason. The witch, we are assured, who was touched with a branch of this tree by a christened man, knew full well that she would thereafter become the certain victim of the Arch Enemy when he returned to claim his periodical tribute from his earthly subjects. This belief is referred to in the following lines :—

"O pleasant is the fairy land,
And happy there to dwell,
But aye, at every seven years end,
We pay a tiend to Hell."

In my own early days I knew an old woman who never locked the door of her house, when she went from home, without taking the precaution to neutralise the malign influences of witches and warlocks over her goods and chattels. This she did by affixing a sprig of Rowan to the keyhole, and under no circumstances whatever would she risk herself abroad without carrying a piece in her basket or somewhere about her person.

Stumps of this tree have occasionally been found in grave-yards and within the stone circles of the Druids—relics, no doubt, of those planted there for the purpose of casting a sacred shade over the remains of the departed. There is an old superstitious belief scarcely yet forgotten among woodmen, that he who cuts down a Rowan will die within the next six months.

Some fine specimens of the Beech (Fagus sylvaticus), are to be seen in the grounds near Lethen House. From the graceful habit of its wide spreading branches, often drooping almost to the

ground, it becomes, in favourable situations, a very ornamental tree. It is said of the timber that "if a Beech be felled in midsummer, the wood will last three times longer than that cut in Winter." The fruit is the well-known Beechmast, which in flavour resembles the hazel nut, but is not held in any great esteem in this country. Although vegetation does not thrive very well under its shade, yet some of the botanist's rarest treasures are peculiar to a Beech-grove. It bears pruning in a high degree, but, curiously enough, refuses to cast its withered leaves during Winter, when, from the frequent application of the woodman's bill, it has been prevented from assuming the ordinary tree-like form. There are in the parish a few introduced specimens of the Blood variety. The original was a single plant found by accident in the Black Forest of Germany, but what peculiar condition of environment gave rise to such a permanent deviation from the normal colour, no one as yet has been able to explain.

The Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), although a native of this country and of frequent occurrence in the district, has in no case reached in Ardclach, the magnificent proportions attained by a few specimens in the neighbouring parish of Cawdor. To an umbrageous form of great elegance, it unites a graceful arrangement of its boughs with a feathery lightness of foliage, which, according to Virgil, entitles it to rank as the most beautiful among the trees of the wood—"Fraxinus in sylvis pulcherrima." Notwithstanding a mist of gross superstition, in which this tree has been enveloped from an early period by the common people in England, it is pleasant to notice that no trace of their absurd beliefs have ever been met with in this district.

That the Oak (Quercus pedunculata) is king of the forest, none will dispute. In Ardclach there are no specimens at present which deserve any special attention. It is evident, however, from the enormous trunks which have been found embedded among moss, that this was not the case in former times. Much of the wood of this buried oak is still seemingly as fresh

and hard as it was six or eight centuries ago. By many it is greatly prized as a material for constructing useful and ornamental articles of household furniture.

The fruit of the oak is the well known acorn or "oak corn" which supplied our forefathers with no small amount of their daily fare, and that too with no unfavourable results, as might be expected if we credit the poet who sang of those who

> "Fed with the Oaken mast,
> The aged trees themselves in age surpassed."

Despite the honours which have been heaped upon this tree in all ages, it has, from time immemorial, been regarded in our own country as a special conductor of the lightning fluid, as recorded in the following lines :—

> "Beware of the oak ; it draws the stroke ;
> Avoid an ash ; it courts the flash ;
> Creep under the thorn ; it will save you from harm."

The moorland and river scenery of Ardclach is indebted for not a little of its romantic beauty to the airy gracefulness of the Birch (Betula alba), both erect and weeping. On the Findhorn banks the presence of its light transparent form quivering against the sky, adds an additional fascination to the scene. It enjoys a special charm of its own, and impresses the landscape in these uplying regions with a richness of verdure which is pleasingly diversified in all the subtlest shades of living green. In the early Spring it delights and refreshes the eye, while at the same time it corrects the dull monotony experienced during the foregoing Winter. To it we owe that wonderful mixture of ever changing hue which lends such a pleasing enchantment both to the river margin and the mountain slope throughout the closing weeks of Autumn.

Among the many virtues, real or supposed, which were formerly ascribed to it, was a strong belief that it was possessed of very valuable stimulant and alterative properties in connection with the scholastic and domestic training of youth. The man, it was said, who first planted a birch beside the school door deserved to

be commemorated as an eminent benefactor to the human race. It is well, however, to be able to say that its ancient reputation has greatly fallen away, so that it is now, scarcely if at all, feared as the "afflictive birch, cursed by unlettered idle youth." In byegone days these poor creatures had good cause to regard it with dismay, as we learn from an old author who observed, "That schoolmasters and parents do terrify their children with rods made of birch."

When full grown this tree is subject to a curious affection, which causes dense tufts of twigs to grow out here and there upon the branches, sometimes in large numbers upon a single specimen. During Summer these bunches are concealed by the foliage, but in Winter when the anatomy is more particularly laid bare, they show conspicuously, looking like a number of dilapidated nests of the previous nuptial season. They are known in Scotland as "witches' knots."

The Bird Cherry (Prunus padus), is occasionally placed among the rarer plants occurring in this country. It is, however, not only abundant on both sides of the Findhorn, but exceptionally large and vigorous. Locally, as well as throughout the Lowlands it is popularly called Hagberry. It may easily be recognised by the copious sprays of snowy white flowers adorning the river banks very picturesquely during the month of May. Generally speaking, it may be considered as a giant shurb or dwarfish tree, but any one who has seen the fine specimens which luxuriate near Glenferness House, will admit that, in a congenial situation, it is capable of developing its stature to a fairly sized tree. The "cherries," which are really drupes, are small with a sweetish subacid taste which renders them rather unpleasant to the palate.

By the end of May the Scotch Pine (Pinus sylvestris) is in full flower. The wild and picturesque beauty of this tree harmonises so perfectly with the sublime features of its natural environments that each, even at a glance, appears to have been created to suit the other. Here we cannot do better than quote the description

penned by a late neighbouring proprietor—Sir Thomas Dick Lauder. He says :—" When its foot is amongst its own Highland heather, and when it stands freely on its native knoll of dry gravel, or thinly covered rock, over which its roots wander far, in wildest reticulation, while its tall, furrowed, often gracefully sweeping red and grey trunk of enormous circumference, raises aloft its high umbrageous canopy ; then would the greatest sceptic on this point be compelled to prostrate his mind before it in a veneration, which, perhaps, was never previously excited by any other tree."

It may be well to notice here the difference in appearance presented to the eye, between this tree and its sister species, the Spruce and Larch. The Scotch Fir develops a flat crown of narrow green leaves, and is in reality a Pine and not a Fir as it is usually called. The other two are conical in shape, and belong to the class of true Firs. The Scotch Fir is a slow growing tree, producing a tough consistent " deal," and has in consequence, become one of the most valuable of the European Coniferæ.

Another evergreen aromatic shrub, pretty frequent in Ardclach and very characteristic of the woodland and hill side, is the common Juniper (Juniperus communis). It produces numerous currant-like cones, locally known as "Aitnoch or Melmot Berries." As it takes two seasons to ripen the seeds, the flower along with the green and matured fruit may be found at the same time on any fertilised bush. The wood is valuable, though seldom, if ever, of sufficient size with us ; but the " berries " are often collected and put into spirits for the sake of their tonic properties. Curiously enough, each of the Highland clans Stewart, Murray, Ross and Gunn, claims to wear it upon their armorial shields as the distinctive plant of their respective families.

Towards the end of the month there may be found at the foot of the Bell Hill on the river side two somewhat rare plants within the parish. The one is the pretty Loose Strife (Lysimachia nemorum) reputed in the writings of the old herbalists as a sure

reconciler of those who were "foolish enough to waste their time in envy, hatred and malice, by quarrelling over their domestic affairs." The other is the graceful Melic Grass (Melica nutans), which is sure to arrest the attention of even the least botanical when noticed for the first time. From its early appearance, and the fact that it succeeds well in open situations ought to secure for it some interest on the part of the farmer. The generic name is derived from the Latin word Mel, which signifies honey, and is given to it on account of the sweetness found in the stem.

The Common Holly (Flex aquifolium), appears to be quite at home as a wildling in the woods throughout the parish. It forms a beautiful ornament in any situation, and is always a great favourite during the Winter months. This truly handsome tree—the only British example of the family—is distinguished by its upright growth, the prickly leathery evergreen leaves, in addition to its pink flowers and bright red berries. As it becomes an almost impenetrable hedge—ever fresh and verdant—it might with propriety be more widely employed for this purpose, while at the same time largely improving the general aspect in the barer agricultural districts. The name "Holly Tree," is said to have originated in former times from the practice of decorating the churches with its branches and berries for the religious services at Christmas.

Another family well represented here is the Lychnis. The different members ornament alike the meadow as well as the river bank. One is commonly known as the Ragged Robin, or Cuckoo-flower (Flos cuculi), because Linnæus observed that it was always in full blossom when the cuckoo arrived in Sweden. Its pretty pink petals look as if they had been accidentally torn; and they flutter about in the breeze like the rags of an Irishman's coat after a turn or two at Donnybrook Fair. The Red (diurna) and the White (vespertina) Campions are plentiful by the footpaths in the sheltered hollows along the Findhorn. They produce flowers of opposite sexes, and, curiously enough, the female of the first and

the male of the second appear to be common, while the male of the first and the female of the second are rather scarce. The White Campion—the modest consort of the Red—gets its specific name from the curious fact that it gives out no smell by day, yet in the evening, after five o'clock, its flowers emit a strong and very pleasant fragance. A fourth member of the same tribe is the Corn Cockle (L. Githago), locally known as "Papple," and only recently introduced to the county among seed-wheat from England.

Perhaps the handsomest of all the British Flora is the Buckbean (Menyanthes trifoliata) called in Moray and Nairn, the "Water Triffle." It occurs in large quantities in most of the upland mossy ponds, and is the sole representative of its genus in this country. Notice the habitat, the creeping stem with its large clover-like leaves, as well as the long spikes of feathery rose-tinted flowers and the identification should be easy. The exquisite loveliness of its blossoms is entirely due to a beautiful arrangement of lace-like hairs within the corolla which makes it impossible for any insect, except those strong enough "to cross" its vital organs with pollen, to descend and rob the nectaries of their contained sweets. The leaves, in former times used as a substitute for hops in the Highlands, are powerfully bitter, and there is medical authority for the statement that this plant contains a valuable principle which, when extracted, has often proved helpful as a tonic to those suffering from weakly stomachs.

All over the dry pasture lands one can scarcely overlook, in its season, the humble Milk Wort (Polygala vulgaris), so named because cows were supposed, on partaking largely of it among their food, to yield increased quantities of milk and butter. The structure of the flower is curious; nor has its physiology been hitherto very satisfactorily explained. The petals occur in all the shades of purple, pink, lilac, and pure white, while the leaves vary considerably in size on different individuals. Vying even with

the buckbean in chaste beauty, just pull a sprig, place it under a hand lens, and then say if ever you saw a sweeter fairy gem.

And now advancing along the hillside we exclaim :—

> "O the Broom, the yellow Broom,
> The ancient poets sung it,
> And sweet it is in Summer days
> To lie at rest among it."

Perhaps there is no other country in which both it and its near relative the Whin thrive so well as in our own. What brown knoll or burn side would be complete without the presence of either or both, dressed in all the magnificence of golden array, and ever enlivened throughout the warm Summer hours with the constant humming of the busy bees? Without doubt the Broom is the more elegant of the two, although, perhaps, not so gorgeously rich in the compact mass of brilliant colour displayed by a well grown whin bush in a favourable situation. The latter forms a very substantial hedge and is extremely pretty when in full blossom. Should the weather be in any degree mild, flowers may be found upon it all the year round—hence the proverb, "When the Whin is out of bloom, love is out of season." Thus it was, that Linnæus having never seen a Whin in the full glory of its inflorescence in his own Northern land, became so enthusiastic at the spectacle when he beheld it for the first time on Hounslow Heath, sheeting the moor with its profusion of yellow blossoms, that he immediately fell on his knees in grateful delight and thanked God for having created a sight so beautiful. Withal, it is a delicate plant, and will not stand much severe cold. The intense frost which occurred in January 1895 almost extinguished it in Ardclach.

Every one knows that hive bees are very fond of visiting the Broom flowers for the sake of the honey and pollen which they find so abundantly upon them. In return for these supplies an important service is conferred upon the vital organs of the plant. In alighting upon the outstanding petals of any fully expanded blossom, the weight of the insect combined with its

endeavour to reach the honey stores, forces out the pistil as well as the long and short stamens, in such a manner that the body of the bee, after a few visits to successive blossoms, becomes completely dusted over with broom pollen. Particles of this are, in due course, transferred to the stigmas of kindred flowers, and thus exert a valuable interaction, which results in the gradual modification and development of both.

During some of the oppressively warm days in the month of August most people have probably had their attention arrested by the broomy "seed bells crackling in the sun," and may have even stopped to watch the fairy fusilade, as it was discharged in honour of the fine weather. After a little careful watching, perhaps the eye may be able to detect a pod in the very act of firing off. In one moment it will have twisted up into spiral shape in the extreme effort of scattering its matured seeds all round. Should the habitat prove favourable, each will take root downwards and in a short time become the parent of a future organism, and thus aid in perpetuating the race for an indefinite period.

These two shrubs are amongst our earliest botanical recognitions. From childhood, even unknown to ourselves, they continue through life to retain, with a wonderful tenacity of grasp, a secret hold upon the affections. Nor do we realise the full power thereof until we find ourselves secluded, mayhap, in the heart of a great city, or settled in some distant clime where either extreme of temperature proves a complete barrier to their feeblest existence.

With the month of June gay Summer comes in full perfection, and all Nature rejoices in the rich freshness of her rural beauty. Some of the wildest and most picturesque scenery in the county is to be found along the Findhorn in its passage through this parish. The bed of the stream, from its entrance at the Streens to its egress at Daltlich, lies almost continuously between two natural ramparts. They jut out every here and there in massive weather-beaten crags, or stretch at times into huge mural precipices, crested with lichens and shaded with pine, birch, and

hazel, serving to produce the loveliest profusion of light and shade in every crannny along the mighty trough. Nor are the various corries and glenlets, running at right angles and pouring in their tributary torrents, less exquisitely adorned with a soft luxuriance of trees, bushes, and wild flowers. On all sides, they wave and smile over shelf and crag and miniature haughs which provide a series of cosy nooks where the botanist is sure to fill his vasculum and reward his search.

The best example is at the Alt-an-áiridh Falls. Here the stream from the neighbouring moor precipitates itself, in a flickering cascade of broken foam, over an almost perpendicular rock some fifty feet in height into a thickly wooded amphitheatre. On reaching the bottom it runs quietly for a short space, when it enters a narrow gorge, where, struggling and eddying from rapid to pool, it finally plunges into the river some hundred yards distant. Standing at the confluence of both waters, and looking at the main stream in its downward course through an exceptionally rough passage, one can scarcely help feeling the appropriateness of Dr Shairp's "Highland River," from which we quote a couple of stanzas as being specially descriptive of the scene before us :—

> "Ha! there he comes, the headlong Highland River!
> Shout of a King is in his current strong,
> Exulting strength that shall endure for ever,
> As lashing down his rocks he leaps along.
>
> O'er the great boulders, foaming, leaping, bounding,
> Thy tawny waters from their loch set free!
> Thou callest on the sombre hills surrounding,
> To come and join in thine exulting glee."

Amid scenes like these, there is such a display of the "beauteous sisterhood' that even on a long Summer day the young student would be unable to make more than a bowing acquaintance with any save the more outstanding individuals, which from every vantage ground, present their glowing petals for his admiring attention.

The Clovers (Trifolium) Red, White and Yellow, are now all

advancing into full flower, but are so familiar that they need no description. They form a valuable Summer keep for cattle, as well as an excellent fodder when dried and stored as hay. Each of the species, but especially the White, is the delight of bees on account of the sweet nectar which these insects extract and convert into honey for winter use.

The leaves are rather variable in colour, and often show a dark spot or whitish horseshoe mark in the centre. These plants, in common with the Trifoils in general, were venerated in a bygone generation as potent charms against every evil influence. Cleft into three sections, they were regarded as types of the Trinity, and worn by lady, knight, and peasant, to protect them from the "noisome" spells of witch and wizard. The poet thus alludes to the ancient practice :—

> "Woe, woe to the wight who meets the green knight
> Except on his faulchion arm,
> Spell-proof he bear, like the brave St. Clair,
> The holy Trifoil's charm."

In withstanding such agencies, a four-bladed clover was *par excellence*. "If a man," says an old writer, "walking in the fields, discovers any grass divided into four parts, he shall in a short while after find some good thing. Thus the person who carries a leaf of the four-leaved or cruciform clover about with him will be successful at play, and have the power of detecting the presence of evil spirits. The lover may put it under his pillow, and he will dream of his beloved, or the maiden may, by slipping a leaf into her cavalier's shoe without his knowledge, as he is about to set out on a journey, secure his sure and safe return to her embrace." Like grasses, the clovers play a most important part in restoring fertility to land which has been exhausted by over cropping. The leaves gather food—carbonic acid and ammonia—from the air, which being stored up in the stems and roots, supply nourishment, after decomposition, for cereals and other crops which are largely dependent for their support upon the condition of the soil.

Of the Vetches, about one third of those common to Great Britain are to be found in Ardclach. The Spring Vetch (Vicia lathyroides) occurs from time to time on the dry pastures, while its stronger sisters, the Bush Vetch (V. sepium) and the Hairy Tare (V. hirsuta) are plentiful in favourable situations. The Tufted Vetch (V. Cracca), so well known to field labourers, on account of the "Mice Peas" which they gather from it in the middle of Autumn is a handsome ornament, with its bright lilac-purple blossoms so neatly arranged in long crowded ranks, as if for mutual protection. Should you not have done it before, carefully remove a single flower from the common peduncle, place it in the palm of your hand, and you will be delighted with the perfect miniature image of a fan-tail pigeon which it so wonderfully resembles. The Heath Pea (Lathyrus macrorhizus) is widely distributed over the moors, but the taste which obtained in olden times for the "Gnapperts," as the underground tubers were called, has long since decayed, and that too, even among the young who so often manifest a strange tendency to revel in abnormal delicacies.

On the moorland pastures, where the soil is fairly rich, the Lady's Mantle (Alchemilla vulgaris) is rather abundant. It grows close to the ground, and bears corymbs of curious yellow green flowers. Its prettily plaited leaves are objects of great beauty, even to those who take only a very superficial view of Nature's perfect ornamentation in each of her many departments. In the hagiology of the Middle Ages the departed saints occupied a very prominent place, and the monkish herborizers of those days intensified their devotion by dedicating many of the commoner plants to their blessed memories. Accordingly some pious botanical churchman, struck with the neat and graceful shape displayed by the leaves of this humble flower, imagined that he saw in them an exact image of the garment worn by the Virgin Mary, and so conferred the popular name. If a young leaf be plucked, immersed in water and examined on either side,

it shows a perfect rainbow of lovely tints all over the surface. This peculiarity is always a delightful source of wonder and admiration to old and young, when the fact has been pointed out to them for the first time. Its Northern sister, Alpina, found but sparingly in our altitude, quite eclipses it in the shining satiny lustre of the deeply cut and finely serrated leaves, which rival on the under side, the most brilliant productions of the modern loom.

On the rough ground which fostered the growth of the Lady's Mantle, one can scarcely fail to come across a bed or two of the Wild Thyme (Thymus serpyllum), so well known for the pleasant fragrance which it so "abundantly flings to the winds" as "morning incense," from its sweetly scented leaves. Springing beside it among the heath, there is quite another gem almost wholly confined to these Northern parts. This is the Chickweed Winter Green (Trientalis europœa). It rises on a slender stem to the height of some four inches, and throws out a whorl of smooth green leaves. From their centre, usually one, but sometimes two, or even three, elegantly formed white flowers again spring with the utmost grace and delicacy. The simple leafy, but especially the septenary division of the organs of fructification, will enable anyone at once to identify this truly floral beauty.

Perhaps the showiest and most stately of all the British Flora is the Foxglove (Digitalis purpurea) or the Deadman's Bells, as it is called in Moray and Nairn. The simple, erect, tapering leafy stems, the large ovate leaves, and especially the campanulate flowers in long leafy clusters, distinguish this species almost at a glance. There is no other representative of the genus in this country, but it occurs very frequently with a few varieties on light sandy banks all over the district. When in the full display of its tasselled inflorescence it forms such a gorgeous spectacle that travellers are often reminded of similar displays in tropical countries.

The villain who altered the popular orthography from Folk's-glove to Foxglove has done much to remove the poetry, as well as the pleasing associations of fairy land, from our noblest British wildling. This was the veritable plant from which the "good folks" were supplied with gloves—delicately tinted silken coverings fit for the hands of such dainty people. Beautiful though it undoubtedly is, the leaves and their preparation have a very bitter taste. The peculiar principle acts with powerful results upon the human vital organs. In large doses it produces violent vomiting, which may be beneficial in preventing its absorption into the system. Although eminently valuable, it ought never to be administered without the prescription of the medical man, as it has an awkward tendency to accumulate secretly, and after a time become suddenly active—producing the most alarming symptoms, and even death. The following lines are said to describe its effects :—

"The Foxglove's leaves with caution given,
Another proof of favouring Heaven,
Will happily display ;
The rapid pulse it can abate,
The hectic flush can moderate,
And blest by Him whose will is fate,
May give a lengthened day.'

Though often found growing apparently wild, the common Elder (Sambúcus niger), or Bourtree, as it is called in Scotland, was almost certainly planted by the early peasantry as a screen fence about their cottage gardens, now long since forsaken. The fine flavour of the berries, used as the basis of the famous elder-flower wine of the last century, has been long known, while the matured wood is often employed as a substitute for box, in making many useful articles. The electrician selects its dried pith for his most delicate experiments, and school boys have from time immemorial converted the hollowed stems into their simple pop guns. In the Middle Ages there was a general belief that it not only supplied the logs of which the Cross was constructed, but that it was the very tree on which Judas himself committed suicide. Hence the

following rhymes were often addressed to it :—

"Bourtree, bourtree, crooked rung,
Never straight, and never strong,
Ever bush, and never tree
Since our Lord was nailed to ye."

as also the old fashioned lines

"Judas, he japed, with Jewish siller
And sithen on an elder tree, hanged himself."

This, tree, as well as the laurel, the mountain ash, the rue and the peony were planted in gardens and about dwellings as bulwarks against the dreaded attacks of demons to whom these plants were supposed to be intolerable.

One of the most abundant of all the wild plants, either in garden or field or by the wayside is the Shepherd's Purse (Capsella Bursa Pastoris). It is familiar to the peasantry along the Moray seaboard as "Witches' Pouches" from the old belief that these airy beings used its triangularly shaped capsules as the seeret repositories of their enormous wealth. Few plants have been more strongly endowed with the power of adapting themselves to the extreme conditions of climate and soil over the world than this ubiquitous little organism. Thus, in Great Britain, it may be found in flower throughout a great part of the year, and consequently the reproductive system may, at almost any season, be examined at the least possible inconvenience. First come the blossoms in the shape of a corymb which gradually developes into a lengthened raceme loaded with the full and empty "purses" according as the obversely set "pouches" ripen their seeds and scatter their contents all around. Much of the interest which might have attached to this plant has been disregarded on account of the great trouble it causes as a very persistent weed.

The next Order is the curious Orchis Family. There is one peculiar feature in connection with their vital organs which often greatly puzzles the young botanist. The stamen and pistil are consolidated into one common mass and known to science as the column. The upper surface alone is distinguishable by bein

slightly moist and lies just below the stamen pouches. In some foreign specimens the irregular petals assume many very grotesque forms, bearing in several instances not a little real, or fancied resemblance to animals, insects, and even man himself. The local species are very prominent objects of beauty and are general favourites in the districts where they occur. Three are highly fragrant—Gymnadenia, conopsea, and albida, as well as Habenaria bifolia which grows in considerable abundance on the Achagour moors. One can scarcely fail to recognise an orchis after having once examined any single individual, The sweet odour is at times even more attractive than the handsomely coloured flower spikes, but few are of any economic value.

In the lower parts of the parish the Wood Hyacinth (Agraphis nutans) is to be found, though rather sparingly. The drooping clusters of bright blue bells each of which is composed of six separate, but connivent parts, form objects of great beauty, waving over the dark green sward on a breezy day in mid Summer. The sweet scent emitted from a bed where it grows in profusion is strong and exceedingly pleasant. In all ages it has ever been a chief favourite.

In some of the shady dells in Dulsie Wood it may be accounted a lucky find should we come across the Enchanter's Nightshade (Circœa lutetiana.) It may be easily recognised by the somewhat heart-shaped leaves, the two white petals, occasionally tinted with pink, and its double celled seed vessel. Curiously enough, it possesses no remarkable properties. Why, therefore, it should have been called after Circe, Homer's famous sorceress—the entrance to whose palace was guarded by wolves and lions transformed from human beings by her baneful arts—is not very easily explained.

It is gratifying to notice here that the famous Linnæa is, without doubt, a veritable wildling in the Parish of Ardclach. On the 29th June, 1890, when accompanied by my friend, Mr Moir of Bombay, we discovered a bed in full flower in the Dulsie

Wood at an elevation of 664 feet. So far as I have been able to find, this is the only known habitat in Nairnshire. It is quite common in Scandinavia, but more especially in Lapland, where it is often found so lavishly scattered over large districts, that in some parts the surface is literally covered with it.

This elegant little creeper is a beautiful evergreen shrubby perennial, with slender branches, some two or more feet in length, which trail along the ground among the thick foliage of the heather and blaeberry, bearing small opposite broadly ovate leaves slightly toothed at the top, the prostrate stems every here and there send up erect filiform flower stalks, which fork near the summit and produce two gracefully drooping, highly fragrant bell-like blossoms of a pale pink colour and almost half an inch in length. The corolla is campanulate, narrow at its base, spreading upwards, and dividing into five nearly equal lobes, which are variegated internally with rosy and yellow patches.

The great interest attaching to this plant consists in the fact, that the Father of Botany selected this humble growth as the medium through which he desired that his name should be transmitted to posterity, because he thought its appearance and lowly habits were very suitable emblems of his own early condition. The modern name, Linnæa, was originally conferred by Gronovius, a Dutch botanist, who, in honour of his distinguished friend, substituted it instead of the old genus Nummularia, and, when in later years the Swedish Government, in recognition of his splendid talents, raised Linnæus to the rank of nobility, and granted him a coat-of-arms, he engraved this tiny blossom on his seal with the legendary motto, "Tantus amor florum." Accordingly, in fitting sympathy with this fond attachment, we usually find that the artist has very appropriately represented the great naturalist as wearing a sprig of his favourite flower gracefully peeping out in modest beauty from the button-hole of his coat.

The curious Hippuris, or Mare's Tail, is not common, but may be found sparingly in shallow mossy tarnlets over the moors.

The jointed stem, so like an Equisetum with its whorled oblong leaves, will greatly help in settling a plant which has often been a puzzle to the young botanist. There is no flower. Only one little stamen and a single style are all that it can boast of in this way.

Another aquatic companion with a branched reddish stem bearing one or two dingy purple flowers, and so resembling a strawberry, that it may at once be put down as a very near relative—it is the Marsh Cinquefoil or Potentilla comarum. A leaf divided into seven pinnæ is always a great prize. Placed under the pillow the sleeper will not only dream of his or her true lover, but be as certain of a happy union as anything doubtful can be. So runs the legend.

Near it on the bank of some water course may be found the Water Avens (Geum rivale), with its dull orange nodding blossoms, growing about a foot or more high and sending out large interruptedly pinnate leaves from the root. This is the Herba benedicta of the old herbalists who tell us that "Where the root is in the house the Devil can do nothing, but flies from it; carried on the person no venomous beast can harm it; wherefore, this plant is blessed above all other herbs."

Here comes a rather dwarfed specimen of the Silver Weed (Potentilla anserina.) The good folk of the Midland English counties are said to have made a preparation from it which could remove those unsightly pits in the skin which were caused by smallpox. Happily, in our day there is little necessity for any one putting its reputed virtues to the test. It does not thrive very well in Ardclach, but in the lower districts of Moray and Nairn, the edible roots were well known to our forefathers as "Mascorns," and not so long ago eagerly sought for by boys and girls whose keen appetites appreciated them as rare dainties. The yellow flowers bear a great resemblance to Butter Cups, and the delicately cut leaves are remarkable for their beautifully white silky gloss on the under side, and hence the trivial name, Silver Weed.

By the time the oats are well into blade, not a few fields appear quite ablaze in one gleam of golden yellow, owing to the presence of a very pertinacious weed. This is the Charlock or Wild Mustard (Sinapis arvensis). Although entirely an uninvited guest, it thrives in perfect safety among the corn, or rather graciously permits this crop to live beside itself. There is no effectual mode by which it can be cleared out other than by the impracticable one of cutting it down from year to year before it has had time to ripen a single seed.

Growing in close companionship, one may be pretty sure to meet the Common Spurge (Euphorbia helioscopia). This plant ought to be of some general interest because it contains an acrid milky juice peculiar to the Order, somewhat dangerous if applied to the skin through carelessness, though in particular, it was famed, and justly so, as a remedy for the easy and effective removal of warts—a disfiguring and very uncomfortable cuticular disease much more frequent at one time than it fortunately is now.

The orange coloured Hawkweeds, a genus so often mistaken for dandelions, are at times only too abundant in many a hay field. They received their early name from a prevalent fancy that eagles, hawks, and kindred birds were wont to use the juices for the purpose of strengthening their eye sight. But Dr Withering suggests that the idea may have arisen from observing the black and yellow mixture which in some of the specimens very much resemble an eagle's eye in appearance, and hence by the Doctrine of Signatures, the consequent belief that "like cures like."

By this time the Meadow Rattle (Rhinanthus Crista-galli) is in full inflorescence, and delights to exhibit its dark spotted stems bearing their yellow, purple beaked corollas in the same cultivated localities. Observe the square rough stalks, the sessile serrated leaves with the spiked flowers, and there should be no difficulty in settling its identity. The name is derived from the noise made by the loose seeds in its compressed quickly matured capsule.

June is now fast drawing to a close, but it has been, indeed, a period of great floral display. Not a few plants which possessed peculiar beauties have been passed over. The more, however, that any one studies the subject, the more certain will it be that these neglected ones too, shall have to yield up their hidden charms, not only for the pleasure but more to the increasing wonder and delight of the botanical student.

Truly the "Spirit of Beauty" is now abroad in every meadow, wood, and vale, and the air is redolent with the perfume of countless blossoms, rich and varied as the hues of the rainbow itself. Even the brown moor now rejoices in its verdant spots, starred with the loveliest wild flowers which deck each bank, glen, and glenlet, to the less trodden paths among the Aitnoch Hills. The astrologers of old, who professed from an intimate acquaintance with the sidereal heavens to reveal the secret things in human fate, believed that an intimate relation existed between plants and planets. According to them, there was not a single species but was an unfailing remedy for one or other of the many ills to which flesh is liable, or as Shakespeare has it:—

> "There are many, for many virtues excellent,
> None but for some, and yet all different."

In their selection these herborizers were mainly guided by the old Doctrine of Signatures—long an undisturbed article of botanical faith. It taught that every plant bore on some part a visible sign of its own peculiar virtues. "Though Sin and Sathan," says an old writer, "have plunged mankinde into an Ocean of Infirmities, yet the mercy of God, which is over all His works, maketh Grasse to grow upon the Mountains, and Herbs for the use of man, and hath not only stamped upon them a distinct frame, but also given them particular Signatures whereby a man may read even in legible characters the use of them." In accordance with this creed every plant which produced leaves more or less shaped like a heart was reputed to be "a singular good medicine for that organ." Vegetable growths which

simulated the ears were considered infallible for restoring the memory and hearing. Thus, the Lungwort's spotted leaves, as well as the flowers of the Foxglove, clearly showed that they were designed as remedies in pulmonary complaints, while the scaly head of the wild Scabious indicated its great value in leprous diseases when properly prepared. In the same way the pretty little Eyebright (Euphrasia officinalis), owed its name to the bright spots and streaks on the corollas somewhat resembling blood-shot eyes peeping about in all directions. It was, therefore, in the opinion of the early botanists, good for clarifying the dim vision brought on by old age. "It has restored sight," says Culpepper, "to them that have been blind a long time before, and if it were only as much used as it is neglected, it would half spoil the spectacle trade." This is the Euphrasy referred to by Milton when he represents the archangel Michael as purging Adam's visual nerve, "To nobler sights, for he had much to see." From the teachings of a later science, however, we learn that the purple lines converging on the petals are simply Nature's "honey guides," from the supposed service they render to insects by enabling them to discover the sweet nectar stored in the cups beyond.

Coming into flower during this month by the river side there are two plants rather uncommon in Nairnshire, and, indeed, not very plentiful over the whole country. These are the Starry Saxifrage (Saxifraga stellaris), and the Yellow Mountain Saxifrage (S. aizoides.) By examining the flower of a near relative from almost any cottage garden—London Pride, or None-so-pretty—there should be little difficulty in settling each of these remarkably pretty wildlings.

Few blossoms are better known or more admired than the Blue Bell (Campanula rotundifolia.) From its slender gracefulness it takes a place among our native flora, and even surpasses many a gaudy specimen in its chaste but beautiful colouring. By the wayside it is a very frequent companion, and, perhaps, there is not

another flower which makes itself so much at home on the breezy moorlands as the "nodding hare-bell." In some parts of the country the inflorescence is called "Witches' Thimbles," and like all other forms of enchantment they renounce civilization, and droop and die if removed from their native habitat. In Ardclach as in other districts, that paradoxical specimen, a white Blue Bell, is occasionally to be met with.

Many young botanists have been puzzled to find out the round leaves indicated by the specific name, rotundifolia, but the fact is that they all wither away soon after the stem appears and before the flowers have expanded. In every Scotchman's heart the Blue Bell holds a place second only to his native heather.

This plant too, was a favourite with the fairies—the active wee folk, who dwelt in the flowers during Summer, and, led by Queen Mab, trooped out in the evening to dance and enjoy their usual fun in the pale moonlight—

> "In shape no bigger than an agate stone
> On the forefinger of an Alderman."

On these occasions the Hare Bells, by the breath of the gentlest zephyrs, were said to ring out the most delicate music for their midnight revels. To the rural peasant, the withered patch in the green meadow was proof positive that they had been there. But science, without deference to this romance, has, in these days, propounded a different theory to account for the formation of the fairy ball-room.

Representatives of the Bramble family are frequently to be met with all over the parish. Among them none can mistake the common Raspberry (Rubus idœus), especially when the fruit is ripe. Jelly from the wild rasp is greatly prized in Nairnshire, and few will pass its berries on a hot summer day without pausing to partake. The little Stone Bramble too (R. saxatilis) is likewise a native, and the slender runners may be often noticed creeping along the ground by the river side and higher pastures. The compound drupe when ripe is crimson, and of a pleasantly acid

flavour. How many can see the Common Bramble (R. discolor) and not recall their personal experiences among its very annoying prickles? The flowers do not appear on their long tangled stems till pretty late in the season, but are followed in due course with their heavily laden clusters, passing from green through dark red to the purple black of maturity. The fruit is never believed to be thoroughly ripe until the first frosts of winter set in. Bramble jelly has a very delicate flavour, and may be found carefully stowed away in the secret recesses of every goodwife's pantry throughout the parish.

The plant is a great favourite with entomologists, because so many insects visit it; some for the purpose of feeding on the leaves; not a few in order that they may suck the flowers; more to eat the fruit, and others, such as the dragon-fly and wasp, to catch their poor victims while they are engaged feeding.

The perennial marshy districts are sure to contain a few very interesting plants, but their growth is so humble that they are seldom noticed by other than keen experienced eyes.

> "By the lone fountain's secret bed,
> Where human footsteps rarely tread;
> Mid the wild moor and silent glen,
> The Sundew blooms unseen by men."

From the researches of Hooker and Darwin, most people know more or less of the carnivorous Dionæa, or flesh-eating plant, called by Linnæus, the Miracle of Nature. They may not, however, be aware that we have, in almost every bog, three equally wonderful species, any one of which clearly exhibits those astonishing characteristics so peculiar to the whole race. These are the Butterwort (Pinguicula vulgaris); and the Round and Long-leaved Sun Dews (Drosera rotundifolia et anglica). The former derives its popular name from the viscid acid substance secreted by the leaves, and the two latter from the small dew-like drops exuded by the red glandular "hairs" which grow at different lengths on the upper surface and margin of the leaves. This "dew" is very sticky, and tiny insects—chiefly midges—alighting

imprudently thereon, are caught in the same way that birds are ensnared on bird lime. Rain drops may fall, or wind blow on it, but without noteworthy effect—a very necessary provision to save useless work. The smallest fly, however, stimulates an increased flow of the fatal secretion, and the struggles of the victim, in order to regain its freedom, only serve to stir up the physico-vital energies of the hungry plant. The red "hairs" or processes immediately begin to bend over the insect, until it is hopelessly imprisoned and finally starved to death. No sooner does this occur and the tissues begin to decompose, than the tentacles commence to prepare a kind of gastric juice which enables them to appropriate the nitrogenous substances contained in the dead body, and apply them to the general support. This is a strange inversion of the Natural Economy—flesh nourishing the vegetable, instead of the vegetable feeding the flesh. In experimenting with some of the more vigorous plants, even small pieces of raw meat are said to have been received and absorbed into the living organism. This forms a curious connecting link between the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and is the nearest approach to anything like a stomach which has yet been observed among plants. It may be worth noticing that the tentacles instead of being composed of cellular tissue or simply a development of the epidermis, contain in their structure spiral vessels, so that they are prolongations of the fibro-vascular portion of the leaves, and not of the cellular part only. In these circumstances it is curious to notice that the roots are employed almost solely for the purpose of anchorage among the slender fronds of sphagnum moss, and are therefore less adapted for sucking up the all important nitrogenous compounds from the soil. To some extent they cease to perform the usual functions, delegating this duty, in the most anomalous manner, to their relative organs, the leaves. The origin and evolution of the insect catching contrivance is a most difficult question, and is still a problem for the future.

Although botanists recognise some sixteen species and a few varieties of wild Roses, yet in Ardclach there are only three.

The Dog Rose (Rosa canina), whose pretty blush blossoms so exquisitely decorate the woods and roadsides, is very abundant in all parts. It was so named because the root bark was supposed to prevent fatal consequences after the bite of a mad dog. In a wild state it varies considerably in the colouring of its flowers, —presenting the beautifully graduated shades of deep red, pale, and almost pure white. The Sweet Briar (R. rubiginosa), or Eglantine, is chiefly an inmate of the garden or an escape therefrom, and noted for the pleasing fragrance which it exhales from both flowers and leaves especially after rain. The other is the Burnet Rose, producing many varieties, and found wild on the moors at Achagour and Cairnglass. It is remarkable for the large flower which it bears even when the stems are greatly dwarfed by poor soil. From a double flowered plant found wild near Perth, florists have obtained numerous varieties which are still cultivated in gardens with fine effect.

Those curious pathological excrescences covered with thick feathery processes looking like bright green and scarlet moss are familiarly known as "Bedegaurs." They are caused by the minute puncture and its associated irritation of small winged insects—Rodites Rosæ of the Cynipidæ Family—in order to deposit their eggs in the rudimentary buds. The natural development is immediately arrested, and a remarkable gall is gradually formed round the recently deposited egg. Cut one open towards the middle of Autumn, and in the centre will be found one or more cells, each tenanted by a small white grub, which in due course would become transformed into a parthenogentic fly and gnaw its way out at the proper time.

Every one has noticed in the corn fields the showily coloured Blue Bottle, or Centaurea Cyanus. It is greatly admired on account of the wreath-like circle of outer barren florets so richly dyed in deep cerulean hues.

The Ox Eye, or Horse Gowan (Chrysanthemum leucanthemum) has large white flowers, pretty much like an overgrown daisy, and is often a rather troublesome weed, being perennial with a creeping brittle root-stock. Its gaudy sister, the Yellow Corn Marigold (C. segetum) is an annual, and was the source, in former times, of no small annoyance and loss to the farmers in this locality, especially along the seaboard of both counties, taking a prominent place in the old couplet :—

> "The Guile, the Gordon, and the Hoody Craw,
> Are the three worst foes that Moray ever saw."

The Sneezewort (Achillea Ptarmica) is pretty frequent near the arable ground, and is so named from the strong odour emitted by the whole plant. The scientific generic name is relative to Achilles, the famous Grecian hero, who is said to have used it for the purpose of healing the sword cuts of his warriors, and hence one of its trivial names is the Soldier's Wound Wort. There was a belief among the Celtic races that if the Milfoil or Yarrow be cut during moonlight by a young woman with a black-handled knife, and the same night placed under her pillow, she would certainly dream of her future husband. The mystic plant had, in the first place, to be saluted in Gaelic, and the charm is substantially in the following lines :—

> "Good morrow, good morrow, fair Yarrow,
> And thrice good morrow to thee,
> Come tell me before to-morrow
> Who my true love shall be."

The flower-heads are bigger, and therefore fewer than those of its companion plant, the well-known Thousand-Leaved Grass (A. millefolium) from the beautifully segmented character displayed by the leaves. Both are strongly aromatic and an infusion of the tender shoots is reputed to be a good remedy for headache. The root being pungent and bitter, induces, when chewed, a copious flow from the salivary glands, and was therefore frequently resorted to as a cheap and perhaps effective cure for toothache.

Here comes a general favourite, decking the margins of the

streams for many weeks during the Summer and Autumn months. It has, very appropriately, been named Queen of the Meadow (Spirea ulmaria—quod non inter ulmos, strangely enough, because it does not grow among the elms!) The early name was Meadwort, that is, the mead or honey wine herb—for the reason that if "the flowers be mixed with that beverage it imparts the flavour of the famous Greek wines." The powerful fragrance of the foam-like cymes gives it a front place in the list of British wild plants. It also affords a valuable and elegant substitute for adhesive plaster in the case of slight cuts. "If the fine dust which may be obtained from the dryed panicles," says a writer on the subject, "be applied to a small wound or similar sore, it dries it up, binding the edges together and so heals the surface."

Now for the Stinging Nettle (Urtica dioica), so well known from the envenomed hairs with which it is so abundantly supplied. Though a somewhat unpleasant, it is withal a rather useful plant. In the economy of our grandmothers, the young shoots were highly valued for making "nettle kale," which they averred required always to be partaken of early every season, in order to keep the system in a healthy condition during the rest of the year. Like the potato and arrowroot, the acrid juices become perfectly harmless after boiling, but the peculiar flavour which remains finds few to relish it in the present day. According to the legend even consumption was amenable to the benign influences of its powerful virtues, for it asserted,

> "If they drank Nettles in March, and ate Muggins in May,
> Sae mony braw lasses wadna gang to the clay."

The hairs are constructed on the same principle as the serpent's fang, being tubular and contain a poison gland at the base from which the formic acid is ejected into the wound. If possible, the smaller species (Urtica urens), common in most gardens, is even more annoying than its more robust cogener, because it lurks quite unsuspected among the herbage and is only too often felt before it is seen. Not only were nettles esteemed in former times as an

article of food, but also for the vegetable fibre they yielded for textile purposes. An old Scotch writer says, "I have eaten nettles, I have slept in nettle-sheets, and I have dined off a nettle tablecloth. The stalks of the old nettle are as good as flax for making cloth, and I have heard my mother say that she thought nettle cloth more durable than any other species of linen."

On the lower flats shelving out from the hill sides, where there is always a good supply of damp soil, the Bog Asphodel (Narthecium ossifragum) may usually be found in great abundance. Compare the flower with that of the Field Rush and you will be struck to find that it agrees in all respects except that of colour. The flower is bright yellow, and beautifully feathered all over the inside. In former times shepherds, as well as flockmasters, firmly believed that when sheep ate of it to any extent they always became affected with a much dreaded disease known to them as "the liver rot." They assured us that the Asphodel produced a gradual decay in the bones of the sheep from its nourishing, in the vital parts, an entozoon which gradually reduced its poor host to a lingering but certain death. A careful examination into all the facts has revealed the cause in a purer light. It is now found that any soil which favours a rapid growth of soft luxuriant herbage, induces the development of "rot" by enabling the embryo flukes (distomæ) to climb up the grass stems from the bodies of aquatic larvæ in which they passed the early stages of their existence. When these plants are eaten by sheep, the cercariæ, as they are now called, are carried into the stomach from which they penetrate into the vital organs where they attain the full development of an ordinary fluke. The parent lays a countless number of eggs—half a million—but happily for the comfort of the poor sheep, their life history is very intricate and beset with hazards. Failures by the thousand, occur at every step, so that comparatively few ever reach the adult condition.

The Perforated St. John's Wort (Hypericum perforatum)—a famous plant in flower lore—is both a common and a beautiful

wildling in the North. The blossoms are regular, with bright yellow petals growing compactly on a branching stem. Notice the curious tiny black dots on the floral margins with the pellucid markings which appear upon the leaves when they are held between you and the light. In former times they were believed to have been produced by the pricks of a needle by His Sable Majesty through spite at the inconvenient virtues of the plant. According to the legend it was specially dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and was reputed to have a peculiar power in nerving the possessor to overcome the most skilful allurements of Evil Spirits. Sometimes it was called Fuga Dæmonum or Devilfuge, because it was regarded as a very dare-devil, and was gathered on St. John's Eve to be hung up in dwelling houses as a preventive against thunderstorms and other vile influences. For magical purposes, it was often burned with no small ceremony in the annual midsummer fires. The peasantry used to carry it about on their persons as an antidote againt all kinds of witcheries and wizardries in a bygone period. They also credited it with wonderful medicinal properties, though it finds no place in the pharmacopæia of the regular practitioner in the present day.

CHAPTER III.

By the advent of the month of August we are reminded that the great Orb of Day has already made considerable progress in retracing his annual course towards the Winter solstice. The lengthening nights, accompanied as they usually are, with their crisp, keen breezes ; the ripening fruits, as well as the gradual lull, day after day, from the full voiced chorus of our feathered friends—all serve to admonish us that the season is again rapidly gliding on from the bright sunny days of Summer to those of a cool, but pleasantly enjoyable character, commonly experienced in the succeeding Autumn. In these circumstances, we can scarcely expect to discover many new additions to the lists of floral beauty ; still we may be assured that a sufficient number will yet be found on the hillside and river bank to occupy our attention and even minister to our delight for several weeks to come.

Chief among these we shall notice a well known friend. There appears to be considerable diversity of opinion among botanists of recognised authority as to which of two thistles—the Cotton or the Spear Thistle—is entitled to the honour of taking rank as the acknowledged national emblem of our country. As the former is rare and very doubtfully native in Scotland, we unhesitatingly pronounce in favour of the Spear Thistle (Carduus

Lanceolatus), which is abundant from Maiden Kirk to John o' Groats. It is one of the stiffest and most thorny of the family to which it belongs, being adopted long long ago, and probably for this very reason, as the badge of the Royal Stewarts. The description of an old writer is very characteristic. He says—"It is set full of most horrible sharp prickles, so that it is impossible for man or beast to touch the same without great hurt and danger." Dunbar in his poem entitled "The Thrissell and the Rois," written in 1503 in honour of the marriage of James IV. with Margaret Tudor, mentions it as the badge of Scotland; and Hamilton of Bargowe expressly states, that the plant was the "Monarch's choice." For fully a century after, the flower heads are impressed upon the Scotch coins, all represented with very little change of figure. This is, no doubt, the one from the circumstances of its position, to which Burns refers in the following stanza:—

"The big Bur Thistle spreading wide,
Among the bearded bere,
I turned the weeder-clips aside
And spared the symbol dear."

According to the legend, this Thistle, like the famous geese of ancient Rome, is reputed to have saved Scotland from the disgrace of a national defeat. Ever since, it has continued to be embroidered upon our Standards, while underneath in letters of gold there is the very appropriate legend as suggested by the British Solomon:—

"Nemo me impune lacessit."

which ought, as we think, to be translated, not in English, but by the good old Scotch—"There's nane o' ye daur meddle wi' me."

Not far away on the drier spots among the heathy pastures, one may very likely come across a humble silvery looking Cudweed (Filago Germanica), with its downy white leaves and hoary stem, some six to ten inches high, bearing a cluster of pale yellow flowers at the summit. Directly from under this head

there usually spring two or more secondary branches on opposite sides of the stalk. In due time these rise to a considerable height and produce flowers exactly similar to the central one. This peculiarity obtained for the plant the name of the Herba impia, from the old botanists, because to them it appeared that the offspring were impertinently assuming the place of advantage and honour which belonged to their parents. The Mountain Everlasting, or Cat's-foot (Antennaria dioica), loving for the most part to grow in similar habitats, is a very near relative of the pretty Edelweiss, the famous bridal flower of Switzerland. As the heads, like it, may be kept for a long time without undergoing much apparent change, it becomes a fresh favourite during the Winter months. Especially is this the case when, under the name of an Immortelle, it goes, in sorrowful affection, to compose the wreath or love chaplet which is laid on the coffin lid of some dear departed friend.

One cannot walk far among the moorland pastures at this season without being attracted by a pretty bluish purple flower rather under a foot high. It is the Field Gentian (Gentiana campestris.) In Ardclach there is only one member to represent the British family of five. It may be readily distinguished in addition to the habitat by its erect angular stems, opposite leaves, small azure four cleft flowers, and the tonic principle common to the genus. Owing to this property it was long used by our forefathers, ere ever they learned the value of hops, for communicating the bitter flavour to beer. It is still employed as a valuable stomachic in domestic medicine.

In the centre of the corolla there is a curious fringe of hairs which very much relieves the dull flower tints. The arrangement is an exceedingly beautiful one, by which the sweet contents in the nectaries are thoroughly protected from the depredations of "forbidden guests," or those insects which are so small that their visits could be of no service to the plant in its all important work of distributing the fertilising pollen over the tender ovules.

In addition to their practical use, these minute hairs are, in numerous instances, a great ornament—decorating the flower, and thereby rendering it an object of beauty both in the garden and by the wayside.

For many years after the beginning of the present century, almost all the cottar houses in this district consisted of old fashioned black huts, a genuine specimen of which is now rarely to be met with anywhere. Generally, they were constructed of neatly-cut square turfs, built alternately upon rude courses of rough hill stones, and thatched with bracken, heath, or broom, above a series of outwardly convex rafters, which, resting on the ground at one end, were united at the other, and held fast by a strong pin under the ridge. Perhaps the only redeeming character of beauty noticeable about this "heap of biggit earth" was the luxuriant crop of House Leek, or Jupiter's Beard (Sempervivum tectorum), which met the eye on every roof and greatly helped to relieve the dull and sombre aspect presented by the exterior. In the Dark Ages when superstition reigned supreme, an edict was issued by the famous Charlemagne—"Et habeat quisque supra domum suum Jovis barbam" (and let every one have Jupiter's Beard on his house.) Such an order only tended to popularise the custom, and confirm the belief that it preserved both the inmates and their property from injury during thunder and lightning storms. The Beard is not native, but appears to have been originally introduced from the Alps, where it is still found wild. The leaves, which become thick and succulent, grow in close rosettes near the ground. The leafy flowering stems spring from the centre and produce bunches of light-red star-like blossoms which are as curious as they are pretty. In Scotland it was known among the peasantry as Fouets or Fous, while the juice of the bruised leaves had a great reputation for "Removing corns from the toes and feet, relieving stings of bees, and curing cuts, burns and scalds."

Even those who are not very botanically inclined must know

from experience that we possess Burdocks (Arctium commune) in fair abundance. They are large branching annual plants, which might be mistaken at first glance for a rough thistle, but the leaves although broad are neither spinous nor decurrent. The whole aspect is coarse and somewhat clammy to the touch, while the globular fruit heads are armed with numerous sharp hook-like scales, which, in order to a wider dispersion of their species, have the annoying habit of attaching themselves to anything soft and movable which may be passing their way. Sheep are greatly distressed when their fleeces become loaded with burrs, and children often delight to throw them at their unwary companions, or arrange them along the edges of their garments like so many rows of massive buttons. Long, long ago, the witty Greeks used to designate these and such like fruits as "Philanthropos," or lovers of mankind, and Shakespeare makes Pandarus say of his relations :—

> "They are burrs, I can tell ye, they
> Will stick where they are thrown."

There is scarcely a lea field or grassy roadside all over the country nowadays which does not produce rather plentifully the Common Ragweed (Senicio Jacobœa.) . Previous to the rebellion of 1745 it was unknown in the Highlands. A few of the Genera are objects of great beauty, and as such are frequently privileged to occupy an important place even in the greenhouse. The majority, however, of the ten British species are somewhat coarse looking plants with erect stems, clothed from the root upwards with the more or less characteristically torn leaves found upon this wildling, and bear lax corymbose clusters of bright yellow composite flowers. None of the domestic animals cares much for Ragweed, and hence, there is often a considerable loss sustained by the farmer owing to its presence in unusual numbers over his pastures. It is only within the early memory of the oldest inhabitants here, that it became anything like common in this parish, and it is generally known in the North

by a name not found in any of the standard works on botanical science.

Soon after the battle of Culloden, we are told that a strange looking weed was observed to spring up, always in the immediate vicinity of the various camping grounds occupied by the English cavalry, all along the route taken by the Royal Forces as they pursued the Young Pretender, "The Bonnie Prince Charlie." The seed was found to have been conveyed among the Southern oats, and occasionally dropped while the soldiers were feeding their horses. From the disagreeable smell emitted by the whole plant, the Highlanders did not take very kindly to the Saxon intruder. Smarting as they were under the inhuman treatment inflicted by the jubilant conqueror upon the defenceless inhabitants, the peasantry, in reproachful reference to the heartless outburst of savage barbarity manifested by William, Duke of Cumberland, after his first and only victory, contemptuously named it the "Stinking Willie." Though now fully naturalised, the stranger is no favourite, and this is the designation by which it is best known to every man, woman, and child, wherever it shows itself in this district, even to the present day.

Doubtless, most people have noticed in gardens and damp fields a very common weed with oblong leaves, showing a dark central stain, and bearing rosy coloured flowers in compact spikes. It is the Spotted Persicaria (Polygonum Persicaria), which as the legend informs us, grew at the foot of the Cross, and there received its purple blotch from the Sacred Blood which fell in drops upon the plant during the Cruicifixion. So fixed did the die become, that neither sun, snow, or rain, through many generations, has ever been able to wash it off. On the same authority we have only to put a good handful of it under a horse's saddle to make him "Travel all the faster, even though he was quite tired before!"

A very frequent companion is the Devil's-bit Scabious (Scabiosa succisa.) The deep blue flowers rising above the short stalked

obovate leaves occur all over the parish. Pull a specimen and examine the root. At first sight it appears to have snapt in the centre, and left a portion in the soil. There is nothing wrong, however, for it is to this "bitten off" character that the plant owes the specific name, succisa. An old writer says, that through its agency the Father of Evil, in former times, was in the habit of working all sorts of malice against our race, but that the Virgin Mary, out of compassion for them, deprived him of this power. So deeply grieved was he to think that mankind were again to have the full benefit of its healing qualities, that in spite, he "bit off" the lower end and left it as we now find it. The device would seem to have been perfectly successful, for even the modern chemist has failed to discover any virtue in the part now left—in fact, this is said to be the only weed not useful for something.

Who does not remember the happy hours spent in early life among the hazel nuts? During the opening months of Spring, and even before the snows of Winter had quite disappeared, the long pendulous tassels bore evidence that brighter days were near. The nuts are said to ripen with the oats, while the foliage in the late Autumn like that of the birch and beech, assumes that rich golden tint which adds materially to the resplendent glory at this wonderful season.

Among the ancients, there is often reference to a familiar kind of divination by means of a rod. Nor was the practice altogether unknown in our own country. Several trees produce wood which has been considered suitable, but a branch from the Hazel is beyond all a favourite medium. The Virgula Divina, or "Wishing Rod," was shaped like the letter Y, and some eighteen inches in length. When in use, the performer held one diverging arm in each hand, and moved forward with the unforked part pointing towards the earth. Should the bearer possess the requisite "gift," the branch, on crossing a water vein, would invariably tremble and bend downwards as if responding to magnetic influences from below.

In a boggy hollow on the Aitnoch farm, we have gathered some very fine specimens of the Parnassia palustris or Grass of Parnassus—a graceful plant which according to popular belief first appeared on that mountain. To see it in all its loveliness one must

> "Hie to haunts right seldom seen,
> Lovely, lonesome, cool and green."

As the habitat is always considerably elevated in this country, it is familiar only to the fewest number, but the elegantly bright green leaves on long foot-stalks, with one clasping leaf on the stem, ought to enable any young botanist to identify this plant even when the handsome white flowers are absent. If at the proper time and place, its presence is sure to attract attention from the snowy corollas, each petal of which is finely streaked with light greenish lines, already referred to as the "honey guides." Standing round the inner bases, one can scarcely fail to observe the curious arrangement of globular headed threads which so effectively heighten the beauty and charm of an exceedingly pretty blossom. For a long time their true functions were a matter of pure speculation among botanists, though it is now generally admitted that they serve the purpose of protecting the nectaries from the ravages of those tiny insects which could be of no service to the plant in fertilising the vital organs.

Where, in all broad Scotland could you expect to find a more delightful and invigorating scene than on the rolling hill sides, or breezy moorland flats along the Findhorn, while they are in the full flush of their purple tints, when

> "The moorcock springs on whirring wings
> Amid the blooming heather?"

Surely no sight could be more picturesque or calculated to impress the mind with a greater sense of freedom and enjoyment than a few weeks spent, far away from the din of city life, among these expansive areas spread out in all the display and variety of floral beauty. In Great Britain, there are only three species of Heather, and they are all plentiful in Ardclach. The Fine-leaved

Heath (Erica cinerea) has dark green leaves arranged in threes along the stem, while the vase-shaped purple flowers are clustered in regular whorls at the upper end. Then there is that very beautiful kind: the Cross-leaved Heath (Erica tetralix) which occurs in the boggier spots, with its leaves grouped in fours, and the blossoms much the same as the last, but clustered in pretty wax-like heads at the summits of the young wiry shoots. It is, however, the Calluna vulgaris, the true Heather which imparts to the hill side its chief botanical feature. The flowers differ in form from the other two. They are not like them pitcher-shaped, but have divided petals showing open oval blossoms deeply dyed in a delicate purplish pink colour. It is the only species known. Now and again isolated plants of the three kinds are found bearing white flowers so greatly valued by the young cavalier as a delicate medium by which he often ventures to express growing attachment to the object of his tenderest affections. The Queen, it may be remembered, writes in "Leaves from the Journal" respecting an incident of this kind which occurred to her daughter the Princess Royal. "During our ride," she says, "up Craig-na-Ban the Prince Frederick William of Prussia picked a piece of white heather which he gave to her; and this enabled him to make an allusion to his hopes and wishes, as they rode down Glen Girnoch, which led to this happy conclusion." The Heather is specially the Highlander's plant, and almost as dear to his heart as the bagpipe itself. When in Autumn it bursts into full bloom, the air becomes perfumed with the rich odour of its well stored nectaries, attracting the bees for miles around from the arable land, to revel among its sweets. From this floral expanse they extract a variety of honey, which is slightly darker in shade but richer in flavour than that obtained from flowers on the cultivated flats.

There was a tradition common among the peasantry that the Picts who formerly lived in these Northern regions knew how to brew beer from heather. A popular version, in my early days, told that the last representatives had encamped themselves within

a strong hill fortress about fifteen miles from Aberdeen. Here they were successfully besieged by the dominant Saxons. After some months the starving garrison surrendered and were all put to death except the chief and his son. To them the visitors offered life and freedom upon condition that they would reveal the process. "If you kill the young man in my presence," said the father, "and show that you can do it very gently, I shall at once grant your request." This having been done, the executioners demanded that he would fulfil his promise. "I am now ready to die too," was the intrepid reply of the old man. "I was afraid that threatened cruelty along with the love of life, might have tempted the lad to tell you all about it, but as there is no fear of that, I shall be content to follow him by any means you like, for the mystery is now safe and can never be known."

Few who have paid a visit during August to the Loch of Belivat—a small moorland tarn—can scarcely fail to remember the White Water Lily (Nymphæa alba). This plant must, without doubt, be allowed to take a front rank among the British Flora. The exceeding purity of these snowy nymphs, as they reflect their rose-shaped blossoms amid the glossy green leaves, can hardly be exaggerated. As the rose is admittedly the Queen of the Garden, so the Water Lily may, with equal propriety, claim to be the Empress of the Lake. Like the sacred Lotus on the Nile, the flowers expand their petals as the day advances, but closing them again at eventide they anew enjoy their midnight repose in "quivering sleep on the water's breast." As expressed by Moore :—

> "Those virgin lilies all the night,
> Bathing their beauties in the lake,
> That they may rise more fresh and bright,
> When their beloved sun's awake."

The rhizomes creep among the peaty deposit which is accumulating at the bottom of the loch, and send up numerous, flexible stalks, several feet in length to the surface where they produce large, cordate leaves, from four to nine inches in diameter. To

the taste, they are bitter and astringent, but entirely free from any poisonous qualities.

Of the two fumitories found in Ardclach, no one need be at a loss to collect Fumaria officinalis as it grows abundantly on almost every corn field. It is often a rather persistent weed where it is not wanted, but usually indicates a good rich soil. In attempting to prepare a nice specimen for the herbarium you will soon find that the minutely divided leaves are apparently so inextricably confused, the one above the other, that the task is apt to be set aside as one which is likely to prove entirely hopeless. The White Climbing Fumitory (Corydalis claviculata), is a rare plant within the parish. We happen to know of only one bed, but it is so concealed between a thicket of Black Thorn and an overhanging rocky precipice on the Findhorn as to be rather difficult to find out. Although generally distributed over the country, it seems to be less frequent towards the West and North. It owes its specific designation to the character of the tendrils with which the leaf-stalks are terminated. The trivial name, on the other hand, is derived from fumus terræ, or earth smoke, either on account of the supposed smoky smell and dingy appearance, or from the ancient belief that these plants were produced without seeds, from peculiar vapours arising from the soil upon which they grew. The family was reputed in byegone days to be possessed of "Remarkable virtues for clearing the skin of many disorders," and one of the early pastoral poets alludes to its use as a rural cosmetic.

With September the season of flowers fast draws to a close. But the tawny Autumn with its cherry cheek and russet brow seems to have stolen a subtle charm from the previous Summer to deck, in a new form, its own wonderful panorama of ever varying Natural beauty. Who among us, in the early Spring, did not admire the virgin foliage dyed in purest green, ornamenting the woodlands and refreshing the eye in restful shades? The poor birds, too, welcomed the change from hardship, storm and

snow. With one glad impulse, the whole community broke out into grateful song, while many a happy pair began, in hopeful security, with fussy activity, to construct the family nest in which to deposit their dearest treasures, under the shelter and concealment of the leafy branches. In the later Autumn, a scene of peculiar loveliness gradually steals over the woodland slopes, draping the whole in richest splendour. As with some magic touch, the emerald leaves of hazel, birch and beech have all slowly merged into a pale red, yellow or purple brown, accompanied with a thousand tints harmonising in the most wonderful cominglement of ever changing colour and shade. On the weighted branches of rowan, gean, or elder tree, the matured berries hang like so many clusters of coral beads. Moving amid such scenes the artist becomes quite fascinated as by some powerful enchantment, while his highest genius totally fails to depict on the canvas anything save the merest imitation of Nature's grand masterpiece. But in an absolute sense, this is not death, as at first sight it seems to be: it is only the benign repose of conscious power. The mission, therefore, is not closed when the angry winds have stripped the leaves from the parent branches and sent their lifeless forms, all crunched and crumpled up, racing and whirling in skeleton dances, over the fields and paths even far into the open country. On at last settling down, these pithless withered things immediately become the prey of innumerable beetles and other insects, while many stately fungi, feeding upon them, help in due course, along with the frost and melting snows, to break up the tissues, and anew make them ready for further use. Let us glance for a moment at another most valuable agency. In the quietest way possible, millions of despised earth-worms are toiling on night and day, incessantly top-dressing the soil with a very nutritious manure. Their tiny subterranean passages, constructed for economic purposes, act at the same time as a complete system of natural drainage, thereby watering as well as relieving the rootlets from a superabundant

moisture. Into these they draw down leaves and other vegetable matter, where, in due course, the whole, along with any adherent soil, is pulverised and converted by their peculiar gizzards into a finer plant-food than ever issued from the laboratory of the profoundest scientist. Thus, though scarcely recognised, the poor earth-worm undoubtedly stands in the front rank among the numerous animals which render the most valuable service to mankind.

In the Coulmony Burn, on the 3rd November, 1894, we discovered a goodly patch of the very rare Autumnal Water Starwort (Callitriche Autumnalis.) At present the data regarding its area, altitude, and local habitats, are rather indefinite. It is a small aquatic plant with long slender branching stems, always remaining submerged even in sluggish streams, though the length is generally regulated by the depth of the water. The leaves are opposite, strap-shaped, and notched at the tips. The peculiar distinctive character resides in the minute white flowers, without calyx or corolla. Formerly, there was some doubt among botanists as to the exact place which this wilding was entitled to occupy in the British Flora, but the difficulty has now been overcome by assigning an Order to itself and sister species, the Callitriche verna. This plant may be frequently met with all over the country, covering ponds and other stagnant pools with its pretty rossette-epidermal appendages.

From the soft emerald displayed in their finely cut fronds every one knows and admires the Ferns. Their graceful loveliness entitles them to take a foremost rank among Nature's most beautiful objects. They are a flowerless race, and their properties and uses are not in proportion to their number in the Vegetable Kingdom. Occupying, though they do, the highest place among the Cryptogamous Plants, they stand far below any of the organised forms just described in the foregoing pages. Unlike them, they are no lovers of the sun ; so wherever shade and

moisture are to be found, there ferns may be expected to occur. The most superficial inspection of any individual will well repay the student for any time or trouble he may devote to its study. The British natives, excluding varieties, number about thirty-seven, but they have, undoubtedly, come in for a greater share of popular attention than most other branches of floral science. This preference may be accounted for by their attractive greenery, elegant forms, and graceful bearing, so peculiar to the whole Family. They form a splendid section in the vegetable ornamentation of this world, and are to be found throughout the Summer and Autumn months sweetly mantling the rocks and hill sides, or pleasantly hiding their stately forms where the sun's rays are partially intercepted and mitigated of their full intensity as they pass through the leafy screen outspread by the overhanging trees. In addition to the enjoyment to be obtained from a collection of dried ferns carefully arranged in a convenient Herbarium, there is the great interest afforded in almost any condition of life by cultivating them in a small garden plot, or rearing them in artistic ferneries under the Wardian case, for window or table decoration.

Of the thirty-seven British natives, about one half occur in Ardclach. The first is the Common Polypodium vulgare. It bears lance-shaped fronds, re-cut from the margin as far as the midrib into lineaform parallel lobes on each side, until the whole somewhat resembles a fish's dried backbone. Old walls and shady banks, not far from cultivation, are its favourite haunts. It may be easily recognised by the large circular golden-tinted spore-clusters dotted over the upper sections of the matured fronds. Should it chance to be fairly well protected from the scorching influences of frost, it remains a pleasing evergreen throughout the Winter months. The plant is a true parasite, and as such may frequently be seen preying upon the fallen trunk of some aged member of the forest—investing its victim with a "gilded halo, hovering round decay."

At two or three spots only, on the river banks, is the Beech Fern (Polypodium Phegopteris) to be found here. In general it loves a damp soil, but thrives all the better if under the spray of some waterfall. From the beautiful arrangement of the numerous pale green, wedge-shaped fronds, six to ten inches long, the peculiar herbage presents a striking resemblance to a small dwarf forest. The identification is easy; the two lowest pinules are widely bent downwards and slightly forwards from the plane of those above, and spring from the midrib at a longer interval than do the others. Rather delicate and fragile, it soon withers after reaching maturity, and becomes rusty looking on exposure to very little frost. How it should have come to receive the name "Beech Fern" is puzzling, as neither in shape, habit, nor locality, is it in any way like this tree.

The Oak Fern (Polypodium Dryopteris), is an exceedingly pretty species, with ternate fronds, and occurs quite commonly among the damp cliffs by the Findhorn and moist sheltered spots in the Glenferness fir-woods. With most people it is a great favourite on account of the soft green colouring of its delicate fronds. This agreeable tint shows all the better when contrasted with the shining black reflected from the slender stems. For grace and elegance, it greatly surpasses all the other ferns in the district.

Here comes a rank thicket of the splendid Male Fern (Aspidium Filix-mas)—a very common but beautiful ornament. It grows abundantly almost anywhere beyond cultivation, such as open plantations and cool shady hollows by the roadsides. The name was conferred from the stately appearance so characteristic of the fully developed fronds, in marked contrast to the more delicate form displayed by its sister species, the Lady Fern. The fronds are bi-pinnate, with obtuse serrated lobes. It produces circular spore-masses near the central nerve, shielded by a scale or indusium, which rises on a hinge as the germs become ready for dispersion. About the month of May, observe the peculiar

growth—shuttlecock fashion—arranged round a central crown, with the newly liberated apexes depending gracefully, like so many diminutive shepherds' crooks.

This plant possesses valuable properties. They depend upon a fixed resinous oil stored up in the root, and are perfectly safe and effective. The root, as it is now prepared, is a royal vermifuge. Not only was it recommended in early times by Pliny and Theophrastes, but it was the celebrated secret remedy for which Louis XVI. paid 18,000 francs to Madame Nouffer, the widow of a Swiss surgeon. To this day it retains an honourable place in the British pharmacopæia.

Take a bite, says the legend, from the first fern you meet in early Spring, and you will never again suffer from toothache. This you may the more readily do when it also asserts that the sap contained the same virtue as the elixir of life, which conferred everlasting beauty and happiness on the person who drank the ambrosial draught.

In every moist wood and damp shady glen the Lady Fern (Athyrium Filix-fæmina), may be expected to occur even in great abundance. Nor does it refuse to brave the rude blasts on the open moors or climb to the highest elevations in the parish.

> "Where the copsewood is the greenest,
> Where the fountain glistens sheenest,
> Where the morning due lies longest,
> There the Lady Fern grows strongest."

The fronds are extremely delicate, and usually fall victims to the first Autumn frost. They are lance-shaped, with pinnate divisions, which are again cut up into a double series of lobes, each bearing three or four pointed teeth.

The fern which occurs most commonly in Ardclach is the Brake or Bracken (Pteris aquilina.) On the exposed sandy moors it seldom exceeds eighteen inches in height, although, in warm shady spots on good soil, the robust fronds sometimes rise to a height of six or seven feet, and form an almost impenetrable thicket—permitting little else to grow among its tall stems. In

these circumstances, the development is proportionately luxuriant and compound, with horizontally spreading divisions, presenting a peculiar aspect of the elegance and beauty, totally different from the poor starveling on the bare hill side. Brackens should always be cut, as the stalks are angular and sharp-edged, and will gash the hand like a knife if broken and plucked incautiously. Of all the native species this one is the most persistently wild. Voluntarily, it will grow almost anywhere, either at home or abroad, but invariably sickens and pines away under the most favourable artificial conditions.

On ascending the Scottish throne after his imprisonment at Windsor, it was to this fern that the "Poet King" referred, when he said—"If I am spared, there is not the wildest spot where the key shall not keep the castle, and the bracken bush the cow." It is the same plant to which Scott alludes in his Lady of the Lake, when he says of the Gael that,

> "His whistle garrisoned the glen,
> At once with full five hundred men."

Then at a given signal waved from their chieftain's hand,

> "Each warrior vanished where he stood,
> In broom or bracken, heath or wood."

To the roe-deer it affords a welcome cover in the depth of the forest, while in bye-gone days it formed an excellent, as well as an enduring, thatch on many a cosy Highland cottage.

If the stem be cut through, in an oblique direction near the root, the outline of the pith as it appears on the section is supposed by some to resemble King Charles's oak at Boscobel. By others it is maintained that Linnæus saw in it the heraldic shape of a spread eagle, and hence his reason for conferring the specific name, aquilina. Dr Johnson, on the other hand, in his "Terra Lindisfarnensis," says the figure is very like the deil's foot, but we are pleased to add, that having no genuine samples of his Majesty's "tread marks" in this parish, it is impossible to test the doctor's statement on this subject.

Among the damp rocks at the Lynemore and Alt-an-Airidh

Falls, the elegant little Green Spleenwort (Asplenium viride), may be met with rather sparingly. This beautiful evergreen, unlike the Polypodium vulgare, appears to shun civilisation, and is frequently mistaken for its commoner sister, the Maiden-hair Spleenwort (Asplenium Trichomanes), found abundantly on the ruined walls of Lochindorbh Castle. The two ferns may be readily distinguished by the colouring along the midrib, which, on the former is bright green, but purplish black throughout in the latter. The tiny oval, scarcely cut pinnæ, arranged for the most part alternately on either side, should enable the amateur botanist to settle its identity with the least possible trouble.

Another very interesting fern is the famous Moonwort (Botrychium Lunaria), about which so much has been said and written in former times regarding its reputed magical properties. In this country it is the only species belonging to the family. The fronds are produced annually, but die down before the Winter sets in. It may be easily enough known from these curiously divided organs, which are separated at about half their length into two branches—the one bearing regular crescent-shaped lobules, having a fancied resemblance to a half moon, while the other is fertile and becomes parted into eight or ten spurs on which are produced the clustered stalkless spore-cases. Although widely distributed in this country, it is a local plant, and as it occurs only occasionally in Ardclach on the dry peaty heaths, the ordinary finder is almost sure to apprise his first specimen as something rare or even new, and usually presents it to the nearest botanist with a request to hear what he has to say about it. Carefully dissect the young stem near its base, and you will be struck to find that it incloses the embryo plant of the next season in a wonderfully developed condition.

The superstitious beliefs connected with this species is of great antiquity, but in mediæval times it appears to have reached the full zenith of its fame, on account of its "Singular virtue for healing green and fresh wounds, as well as converting mercury

into pure silver." The Moonwort must have been an object in special request among burglars, thieves, and robbers, since it had the reputation of undoing at will, the most ingenious contrivances in locks and bars ever planned to protect life and property among rich and poor.

"Moonwort," says an old authority on this subject, "is an herb which will open the locks wherewith dwelling houses are made fast, if it be put into the keyhole; as also that it will loosen the locks, fetters, and shoes, from those horses' feet that go upon the place where it groweth. This, some laugh to scorn, and those no small fools neither, but country people that I know call it Unshoe-the-horse. Besides, I have heard commanders say that on White Down in Devonshire, near Tiverton, there were found thirty horse shoes pulled off from the feet of the Earl of Essex's horses, being then drawn up in a body; many of them being newly shod, and no reason known, which caused much admiration, and the herb usually grows upon heaths."

It is to this plant that the Ettrick Shepherd refers when he says :—

> "The first leet night quhan the new moon set,
> Quhan all was douffe and mirk,
> We saddled our naigis wi' the Moon Fern leif,
> And rode fra' Kilmenin kirk."

Another order of plants very common both upon the dry and boggy uplands is the Cyperaceæ or Sedge family. Being very like the Grasses they are often confounded with that Class, but may be readily distinguished by the stems, which are solid and angular, while those of the Graminæ are hollow and round. It is a curious fact, that though they are very nearly allied to the Grasses, they scarcely, if at all, yield any of the feeding qualities so valued in that order. Their importance does not depend on their immediate utility to man, but they frequently form the chief vegetation in the swamp, and by their continued growth and decay gradually form a new soil upon which more valuable plants may be raised at a later period for his benefit. The

ancient Egyptian writing papyrus was the manufactured product of a sedge luxuriating on the Nile even to the present day. At the South end of the Loch of Belivat one species covers a considerable area, and will, no doubt, some day manage to creep over to the opposite side, and thus convert the whole water surface into a large fertile meadow.

The Spike Rush (Eleocharis palustris), is to be found in the same habitat, binding the loose sandy deposit into a compact mass by its long horizontal rhizomes. Sometimes this plant contributes largely to the formation of peat. In the Levrattich mill dam the Bottle Sedge (Carex ampullacea) grows and flowers very freely. Among the most notable Cyperaceæ are the Few-flowered Sedge (Carex pauciflora), pretty common on the moors; the curious looking Flea Sedge (Carex pulicaris) and its star-like sister, the Little Prickly Sedge (Carex stellulata), each of which may be observed in the spongy hollows, and even in favourable circumstances, climbing the mountain side to a height of 3000 feet.

The Rushes are not numerous here, but the crop in warm boggy spots is often abundant and occasionally used as litter about the farm steading. From June to August they are at their full strength, being generally in blossom during the month of July. Ascending the vegetable scale these plants are the first which produce a whorled flower, but without petals. The smooth green stems contain a large pith formerly used for wicks in the black "crusie" lamps, now only to be seen as old-fashioned curiosities in local museums. Centuries ago, and before carpets were introduced, rushes were largely employed for strewing on the floors, and to this custom there is frequent allusion in the early writings. The Baltic Rush (Juncus Balticus) is found a little South of the old Schoolhouse—its farthest inland station on the Findhorn. Beside it we noticed the Blunt-flowered Rush (Juncus obtusiflorus) in the only habitat within the parish. It is rather scarce in Scotland generally, and only sparingly

distributed over England. On the dry moors the Heath Rush (Juncus squarrosus) is quite at home, but its rough vegetation affords little or no nourishment to the local fauna. A near relative is the Great Wood Rush (Luzula sylvatica), which grows luxuriantly on the damp haughs by the water courses. The long, soft, grass-like leaves, overtopped by the rush-shaped stems, bearing terminal double compound flowering panicles, form a rather striking ornament among the less robust herbage throughout the Summer months.

THE GRASSES.

As Ardclach is to a large extent pastoral, the natural grasses occur in great abundance, carpeting the warmer hollows and alluvial patches in the early Summer with a pleasing shade of richest green. The number of species, however, is not great. Of the hundred and thirty common to this country, the Ardclach group is composed of those individuals which are more generally distributed than many others which might be selected from among the British wild grasses. They are found in water as well as on the land, and almost always in society, though occasionally alone. Their value as fodder for cattle is scarcely less important than that of grain for human food. The moorland grazings are valued pretty much in accordance with their presence or otherwise. Like other plants, grasses choose their soil —sand being the least favourable. Some thrive only in poor ground ; others require a rich loam, while a few are adapted to the lowland meadow and flourish fully in land of the best quality. Two or three still manage to retain a good position among the farmer's crops—feeding on the strongest manures—but are always regarded as troublesome intruders and systematically rooted out whenever possible. In general, grasses are harmless, if not nutritious, but there is a single, Lolium temulentum, which is decidedly hurtful and has been the cause of much trouble and many deaths among herds unfortunate enough to meet with it on their usual pastures.

The Soft Brome, or Goose Grass (Bromus mollis), is frequently an unwelcome guest in hay fields, where it sometimes manages to claim the best of everything to itself. It grows well on light ground, and although freely eaten by cattle, is not much valued by the farmer, either for the bulk or quality of the fodder which it yields. Some even maintain that it possesses slightly injurious substances.

Wheat Grass (Triticum repens), well known on the farm as "Quickens," or "White Root," is a very persistent intruder. Despite rotation cropping and the careful cleaning of the turnip ground from time to time, its creeping underground stems manage to hold their place owing to the power of budding at every joint. In a year or two, if not regularly grubbed and collected, it would entirely extirpate its less assertive cogeners, the foreign grasses, sown by man.

In fitting companionship there is the Oat-like Grass (Arrhenatherum avenaceum), locally known as "Knap Grass" or "Swine's Arnuts," from the fleshy bulbs developed at the base of the stem. Although luxuriant in early Spring, it is not very much relished by cattle from the bitter principle contained in its stalk.

Another species, the Sweet-scented Vernal Grass (Anthoxanthum odoratum), is a small annual plant quite common on the moors and by the roadsides. Coming up early, it continues to send out young leaves till well on in Autumn. It contributes largely to give the peculiar pleasing smell to new hay. The active agent is known as coumarin, and is the same substance which exists in Woodruff and to a still greater extent in the well-known Tonquin Bean. Although not much valued as a nutritive grass, yet owing to its presence, cattle often relish a change from the arable to the natural pastures. For the above reason housewives sometimes give it a place in their wardrobes to impart a pleasant odour to their contents and prevent moths and other insects from attacking the fabrics.

Growing and flowering freely in rank tufts on waste places and

by the roadsides, the Cock's Foot Grass (Dactylis glomerata), is generally distributed during the Summer all over the parish. In its wild state, it has a rather coarse bluish herbage sending up a stem about three feet high, with a loose panicle, each of whose divisions bears a cluster of flowers at the extremity. Springing with great rapidity and yielding a large quantity of foliage, it is readily eaten by cattle, horses, and sheep. As the roots strike to a considerable depth, it is capable of enduring the Summer drought better than many others. Although seldom sown where the artificial grasses succeed, it is well adapted for dry, sandy, exposed soil, and might therefore be expected to prove of some value in such situations here.

Another hardy elegant little plant is the Bent Grass (Agrostis vulgaris). "Among the British species it may at once be known by the glumes, or outer scales of each flower being two in number. unequal in size, of a membranous texture, and containing but a single floret; while the paleæ or inner scales are short, very thin, almost transparent, and two in number, the larger of them occasionally having an awn on its back." The light soil in Ardclach appears to be particularly well adapted for its growth, hence it may be met with anywhere beyond cultivation. Except that it is relished by his cattle as an agreeable change from the field, the farmer pays comparatively little attention to its growth. Although not regarded as very nutritious, it resists the scorching Summer sun in a high degree, and thus provides a staple part of the upland pasturage throughout the grazing season. When permitted to get into the arable soil it is apt to become a rather troublesome weed from its creeping vivacious stems. Found in different situations, it varies so much, both in size and appearance, that botanists, in some instances, have described these forms as constituting distinct species.

On the South-East side of the Loch of Belivat there is a beautiful fringe of the stately Reed Canary Grass (Phalaris arundinacea), which attains a height of four or five feet in July.

The large spreading panicle is greenish-white with a tinge of violet, and is pretty sure to attract attention when seen for the first time. The strong fleshy roots love to reticulate far into the wet sandy banks, thus enabling it to send up a rank crop of juicy leaves, which are readily accepted by Highland cattle as a pleasant contrast to their usual diet on the surrounding moorland pasture. The curiously streaked variety so well known to every one as Ladies' Tresses or Gardeners' Garters, is to be found in many cottage gardens as an ornamental grass.

Of all the native plants the Meadow Grass (Poa annua), is, perhaps, the most widely distributed in Great Britain. The genus has its glumes rather unequal; the outer paleæ with three or five nerves, membranous below, scarious at the tip, compressed, keeled, unarmed, and the styles terminal. The herbage is tender, sweet, and generally abundant. Springing up rich and green, it presents itself wherever man in all his wanderings may choose to pitch his tent. On account of the tonic nutritious qualities every domestic ruminant grazes it with evident delight. As a weed it persistently invades the choicest spots within the garden, causing some trouble to get it rooted out if it is once allowed to get a firm hold. Should the Winter prove fairly mild, it may be noticed in fruit struggling on any untrodden spot, here and there about the doors. During Summer it is said to ripen seed in four to five weeks from the time of sowing. To this plant we are indebted for much of that mottled and beautiful appearance on the hill sides where those waves of emerald green roll silently into their long glens and relative glenlets, carpeting the whole with a sweet verdure, while at the same time it brings into pleasing scenic relief the bolder characteristics produced by crag and scaur among the upland wilds.

THE MOSSES.

There is an old legend which says :—

> "The ferns loved the mountains, the mosses the moor,
> The ferns were the rich, and the mosses the poor,"

and that formerly each of these plants kept to its own locality; but the sun scorched the mosses, and dried the roots of the ferns, while the wind beat pitilessly upon both, and thus by affliction they were brought to a sense of duty, and each agreed to help the other. So the tall ferns shielded the mosses from the sun, and the mosses protected the roots of the ferns from the wind, and kept them moist.

Regarding the mosses upon the wall, many are apt to conclude that very little can be said. Nevertheless, to the student of nature these lowly forms exhibit a unique beauty, and are objects of the greatest interest. It is through the silent operation of these lowly structures for many generations that all our extensive swamps of bygone years in Ardclach have been transformed into valuable peaty matter, so largely used even to the present day as a domestic fuel. Flourishing along the various water courses, they afford shelter and homes to countless myriads of tiny insects which roam about in all the fulness of life and joy among the miniature branches, as do the higher animals under the protective shade of any undisturbed forest. In the Highlands, Polytrichum commune, the Golden Maiden Hair Moss, is sometimes made into neat little brushes, and Sphagnum, when steeped in tar, has been used for caulking ships. As mosses never take on mildew they are found useful for packing roots and young trees intended for exportation, and large trunks found among peat, chiefly composed of Sphagnum, shew its power of preserving wood from decay.

All true mosses have leaves, however small. They are directly attached to the stem and are always undivided except at the edges which are finely serrated in a saw-like fashion. Though they contain no visible pores, yet they are capable of absorbing water with great rapidity. Very interesting, too, are the reproductive organs. In general the flower has little or no brilliancy by which to arrest the attention of the careless observer, but when viewed through a good microscope, they are found to equal, if not in some cases to surpass in beauty and design, many belonging to

the higher orders. As they arrive at maturity, minute stellar blossoms, more or less coloured, appear on the summits. These represent the ordinary stamens and contain the fertilising dust, which when ripe is scattered in all directions. On the same plant may be seen another series of pear-shaped bodies, pierced longitudinally from apex to base with a hair-like canal communicating near the centre with the pistil or female germ. When this embryo has become fertilised, it begins to grow with the result that a slender stalk commences to shoot upwards. In due course a small cup, neatly fitted with a beautiful lid, is developed on the top. Inside this chaste little seed vessel the true spores are contained, and when fully matured are freely projected all over the soil where, in suitable environments, they at once take root and give rise to a young succession of the original mosses. Thus, by what is called alternations of generations, there are two stages in moss development. That is, the child is not the same as the parent but exactly resembles the grandparent. First, there is the ordinary process from which the distinctive organs of reproduction are formed, and thereafter upon a secondary growth, from which the germs proper, without further fertilisation, give birth to an individual race similar in every respect to the original parent plant.

FUNGI.

The Fungi are among the most numerous of all plants as to genera and species, and are developed in size at both extremes. This may be observed in the striking contrast between the large fleshy Boleti and the microscopic mould-plants, composed of threads much too small to be seen by the naked eye. Yet the giant Boletus is simply a grand massing of the same vegetable tissue constituting a minute Mucor. Both grow after the same plan, and are propagated by means which are entirely similar. The early botanists regarded the whole race as *lusus naturæ*, and therefore, no plants at all. Appearing with astonishing rapidity and from unknown causes, some even maintained that they afforded the very best

examples of spontaneous generation. Their life history is now better understood. Feeding as they do on organic substances, and probably inhaling oxygen gas like animals, they form distinct exceptions to the general plan of vegetable life. Be this as it may, they have no power such as that possessed by plants with chlorophyll, or green colouring matter, of decomposing carbonic acid gas and emitting oxygen. Although they grow in their season, almost anywhere, yet, with the exception, perhaps, of the Common Mushroom, very few people are able to tell one species from another. Unfortunately there are no simple reliable characteristics whereby the edible may be distinguished from poisonous. In commencing the study of the British Fungi, a good plan is to settle the peculiar qualities of a few well-known species and gradually extend the number with experience and as circumstances may permit. To those who care to try, the experimental method is infallible—Eat the unknown species and if it does you no harm, it is wholesome, but if it causes sickness or kills you, it is evidently unfit for human food! The number of really poisonous fungi in Great Britain is comparatively few, and the list is gradually being reduced by science and experience. Any specimens, however, giving out an unpleasant smell, or if the juice changes colour, especially to blue, when cut, should be regarded as very suspicious, and set aside for the time being, as dangerous. My local catalogue is simply an illustration of the fungi occurring in Ardclach and may be greatly extended in the future.

The Lists are given in the Appendix.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAUNA.

Mammalia, aves et Reptilia.

BADGER.—"Brock." (Meles Taxus).—Everywhere this is rather a scarce animal, but owing to its nocturnal and solitary habits, is believed in some districts to be rarer than it really is. The last specimen which we have heard of in the parish was captured in October, 1888, on the Findhorn, below Coulmony House. It was kept in confinement by Mr Sinton, gardener, Glenferness, until the following Christmas, when it managed to regain its freedom and took to the rough pools on the river at the "Rock Walk," a short way below the Mansion House. No traces of it were ever afterwards seen. The remains of an old badger warren are still distinctly traceable among the soft soil at Jacob's Banks.

POLECAT.—"Foumart." "Fozzle" of Moray. (Mustella Putorius).—Some fifty years ago the old people remember the "Foumart" as a frequent depredator in the hen-house. While at play on the right bank of the Findhorn, the boys attending the Ferness Public School, in November, 1891, succeeded in killing a fine specimen and brought the carcass to show us what "a big weasel" they had caught. In this parish, as elsewhere, the Polecat has become extremely rare, if not

entirely extinct, on account of the relentless war incessantly carried on against the whole race by the local gamekeepers. In former times it often proved a very troublesome neighbour both to the farmer and proprietor, should they attempt to rear a coop of fowls, or preserve a stock of game within its reach. Blood, and brain above all, appear to be esteemed among its choicest dainties, even in a very rich and extended dietary. Beginning with the egg, it persecutes all game birds through every stage of their existence, and is a far more determined enemy to the hare and rabbit than even the ermine and weasel themselves.

WEASEL.—"Whitret" of Scotland. (Mustella vulgaris).—This lithe little animal is pretty common here. Although when pressed by hunger it does not hesitate to attack poultry, hares, rabbits, and even game birds, yet, when the hen-house is beyond danger, it is generally looked upon by the farmer as a welcome visitor about the square and stack-yard, where it is of great service in destroying mice, rats, and voles, which prey upon his crops. Active and untiring as a hunter, it tracks the mole and field mouse by eye and nose, and will even climb trees in search of birds' eggs. The bite which it inflicts on the back of the head seldom fails to lay its prey in a few minutes a helpless victim at its feet.

ERMINE.—"Stoat." (Mustella erminea).—Although scarcely so frequent as the foregoing species, yet a few specimens are sure to occur now and again all over the parish. Sometimes, during a prolonged snowstorm, the Winter fur becomes perfectly white, excepting the tip of the tail which remains permanently black. It is still firmly believed by many in Ardclach that both the Ermine and the Weasel have a peculiar power of influencing rabbits and small birds by a sort of fascination which so destroys their sense of danger that the poor creatures allow themselves to fall an easy prey to an enemy from whom such creatures might be considered as more than ordinarily safe.

OTTER.—(Lutra vulgaris).—Though of less frequent occurrence

now than formerly, the Otter may still be met with along the whole course of the Findhorn, where, in past years, it lived as in a stronghold, and often committed great havoc among the salmon. Like the other Mustelidæ, it seems to delight in hunting and killing many more than it is able to eat. It makes a meal very daintily off the choicest part of the fish, generally leaving the greater part of the body untouched. The whole frame is beautifully adapted for movement under water. The eyes are so placed that whether it is swimming below its prey, behind, above, or beside it, the victim is seldom out of sight. On land it lives in burrows, or holes under the roots of trees, but always as near as possible to the water's edge. As we write (11th April, 1892), a fine female has just been caught in a trap near the Rock Walk at Glenferness.

Fox.—"Tod," "Reynard." (Vulpes vulgaris).—The fox and his predatory excursions to the poultry yard are still well remembered by the old people here. Although a stray specimen or two from the Cawdor hills may from time to time be seen on the higher grounds, it is doubtful if there be at present a single den within the parish bounds. During the early part of the present century he was very common, finding a safe retreat in the event of threatened proceedings on the part of an outraged community, on the island in the ravine opposite Daltra on the Findhorn, as well as under the impregnable cover at the Black Park on the side of Cairnbar. During the short Summer nights, in bygone days, he has often been seen on his way to and from the nesting quarter on the Loch of Belivat, where he feasted sumptuously for several weeks in the year on the eggs and young of the black-headed gull (Larus ridibundus), and kindred water fowl. In his usual warfare against the lower animals, the fox grants no mercy, and when, through misfortune, he himself falls a victim to the spoiler, he is consistent enough to ask none, however serious his case may be. The local gamekeepers state that the individuals met with in this district are slightly darker and a size smaller

than the specimens occurring in the more favoured flats along the sea-board. This circumstance may account for the old belief, now almost forgotten, that the former variety was known as the "sheep fox," while the latter was generally called the "fowl fox."

WOLF.—(Canis lupus).—Although this creature has now been extinct in Great Britain for over one hundred and fifty years, it is interesting to know that the last specimen is believed, according to constant local tradition, to have been destroyed in the year 1743, by one Macqueen of Pollochoch, near the head of the Findhorn. Hearing that a large "black beast" had killed two children, who, with their mother, were crossing the hills from Cawdor, the Laird of Mackintosh summoned his retainers to scour the district, and, if possible, bring the culprit to justice. On the morning appointed all, except Macqueen, arrived in due course. After some delay he, too, very leisurely put in his appearance, and was soundly scolded by his Chief for culpable neglect. At last he ventured to say, "Ciod e a' chabhag?"—"What was the hurry?" The Laird, heated with anger, impatiently replied. Thereupon, Pollochoch lifted his plaid and drew out the black bloody head of the wolf from under his arm. "Sin e dhuibh"—"There it is for you,"—he said, and tossed it on the ground in the midst of the astonished circle.

MOLE.—(Talpa Europæa).—"Moudewort."—The provincial name is derived from the Old English, "Mouldiwarp," meaning to throw up earth. It has sometimes been stated by southerners that the mole is a rare inhabitant in the North of Scotland, but in Nairnshire this is not the case. It was at one time so abundant that mole-catching was a profitable business—the local functionary having been paid thirty-five shillings for moles destroyed at twopence per tail, in one season on Glenferness Mains. This man informs me that, during a pretty long experience, in addition to the white moles found at Dalless, Cawdor, by his predecessor, he caught in his own traps one pure albino in 1877 at Milton of Moyness, two grey specimens in 1872 at

Drummin in Edinkillie, and the same year a couple with pale yellowish bellies, at Carnach in the Streens. Although moles are kept down here as elsewhere, the farmers are too sensible of the undoubted benefits conferred upon agriculture by this incessant labourer, to advocate, as is sometimes done, a policy of complete extermination towards the whole race.

SHREW.—"Straw Mouse." (Sorex vulgaris).—Popularly this little creature is always classed as a near relative of the common mouse. Few take the trouble to observe that it must belong to an entirely different family, as shown by the fact that it possesses insectivorous and not rodent teeth. It is not often seen alive, but its presence in many a mossy bank is frequently announced by the sharp excited notes which it utters on the approach of any real, or supposed danger. Most people have noticed the mortality to which the race is subject during the Autumn months, but as yet no satisfactory explanation has been given. Shy and inoffensive though it is now known to be, it is even to this day occasionally regarded with not a little of that superstitious dread which unfortunately, from a very early period, biased the rural mind against its appearance under any circumstances in, or near, their dwellings.

WATER SHREW.—(Sorex fodiens).—This species is so seldom noticed that many have no idea of its existence at all. The fur is glossy black above and white beneath. It burrows in the banks of streams and is very aquatic in its habits. Our tom cat caught a pair in a small stream near the schoolhouse and brought them home, but, as in the case of their nearest relatives, he refused to eat them.

HEDGEHOG.—(Erinaceus Europæus).—This is, perhaps, the oldest mammal in Great Britain, and probably the best known of all the nocturnal animals in this district. It is now by no means so rare as it was fifty years ago. We have frequently met with it in the woods after sundown eagerly searching for its breakfast among the short herbage. From the fussy habit it has of snuff-

ing and blowing at every object with which it comes in contact while thus engaged, it often betrays its own presence in very unexpected places. The food consists chiefly of insects, worms, slugs, and snails, though in confinement it appears to thrive very well on porridge and milk. During Winter the hedgehog retires to a sheltered recess at the base of some tree or similar situation, where, rolled up in a bed of dried leaves or moss, it hybernates quite comfortably without any visible store till the return of milder days in the following Spring. In this county it has no reputed malpractice for sucking eggs, either in the henhouse or game-preserve.

BAT.—(Vespertilio Pipistrellus).—Common as the bat is on the warm evenings throughout the Summer, yet how few have ever been able to examine one alive, or even think that there are more than one species. Appearing suddenly from some dark cranny in the early dusk, and, darting about the house with its peculiarly irregular flight, it becomes at times rather difficult to say whether the creature is really a bat or a large moth. Armed though the whole tribe be with teeth sharp as needles, and scarcely larger than so many points thereof, no British species can bite so as to injure even the most delicate skin. Except in the power of flight, the bat differs entirely from all the rest of its aerial companions, the birds. It usually produces one, though occasionally two, young ones at a birth, and hybernates during Winter—coming out of its retreat weak and greatly emaciated to prosecute a valuable warfare against gnats and midges, which without this and similar agencies, would become intolerable plagues to us both by day and night.

SQUIRREL.—(Sciurus vulgaris).—In Nairnshire this frisky little creature was entirely unknown until about the year 1852, when it appeared and was carefully protected in the woods along the seaboard parishes. Since that date, however, it has gradually increased in numbers wherever there was tree cover. By and bye, the proprietors began to shoot it down

on account of the injury it unfortunately caused to the fir and pine plantations on their estates. Selecting in Spring the most robust trees, the squirrel sets to work within a few feet from the top, and generally peels the bark clean off, thereby exposing a patch from six to ten inches broad round the stem quite bare. Several branches are often treated in the same way, and according to the damage inflicted on the plant, it either dies or becomes in proportion much reduced in value. During the greater part of the year, the little fellow feeds on acorns, beech and hazel nuts, as well as the seeds contained in the fir cones. When these are abundant, there is always less injury done by peeling. It seems to skip from tree to tree as if for pure enjoyment, but is a great plunderer of any birds' nests which may fall its way. For the most part it sleeps rolled up in its drey during Winter, only waking up occasionally to feed on its hidden stores.

House Mouse.—(Mus masculus).—This little freebooter is an almost universal pest, and well known to every one in this country as a self-invited guest both in the pantry and stack-yard, or wherever grain is stored, with the possibility of any convenient retreat. It is entirely dependent on civilised man, and accompanies him in all his wanderings over the earth.

Long-tailed Field Mouse.—(Mus sylvaticus).—A common species in woods, fields, and gardens, where it is often very destructive. It is rarely found in dwelling houses, and when it occasionally enters does not seem to explore much, if any, beyond the ground floor. The female often produces from seven to ten mouslings at a birth, and she may repeat this number in the same year. For the size of the animal, the hoards collected in the under-ground retreats, are sometimes enormous. Cats prey on field mice equally with the foregoing.

Black Rat.—The "Rottan" of Scotland. (Mus Rattus).—From the close of the fourteenth to the beginning of the present century, this rat held undisputed sway everywhere. But in our day none, except the oldest inhabitants, know anything about it

beyond what may be gathered from works on Natural History Less decidedly a burrowing species than the Brown Rat, it preferred living in drains and holes about the floors and foundations of houses, though it frequently established a comfortable residence in the dry thatch of those old fashioned turf huts once so common all over the country. With the introduction, however, of stone and lime, slate and concrete, in the construction of rural dwellings, its favourite retreats were entirely abolished, and the new condition proved a great misforture to the whole race. For several years after the arrival of the Brown Rat from the Continent, both appeared equally common, but in the keen struggle which set in for existence, the larger and fiercer form so completely prevailed in the end that it is now doubtful if there exists a solitary specimen of the ancient breed even in the British Isles.

Brown or Grey Rat.—(Mus decumanus).—This bold marauder, "Whose hand has been against every man, and every man's hand against him" from time immemorial, is now a fully naturalised subject in this country. Its habits and astonishing intelligence are only too well known to everyone but particularly so to the merchant and farmer. The greatest difficulties are surmounted in order to obtain some coveted dainty, and much relative damage is often caused in the execution of its purpose. Rats devour meat either raw or cooked, but will eat almost anything—grain, eggs, young birds, and even their own species. Not unfrequently do they increase about the farm to such an extent that their presence can be considered nothing less than a plague. Feeding for some days with a mixture of meal and plaster of Paris is said to be a most effectual way of getting rid of very troublesome visitors.

Water Vole.—Locally, the "Water Rat." (Arvicola amphibia). —Naturally extremely shy, this creature is not very often seen, and is popularly set down as an aquatic member of the Rat Family. In this parish it is fairly common on the banks of all the lochs and burns, where it burrows and breeds in comparative safety. The feet are not webbed, but it dives and swims freely as well under

as on the surface of the water. Owing to its identity being frequently confused with its omniverous cousin, it is often branded as a bad character, and as such is persecuted, although entirely a vegetable feeder, as an enemy of the fish pond and the trout stream. The black variety (Arvicola atra) occurs in the same habitats but differs in no respect from the above except in colour.

Meadow, or Short-Tailed Vole.—(Arvicola agrestis).—At present (1892) this species is rather more plentiful in the district than could be desired, especially when we consider the ravages which are being inflicted through this agency on some of the Border Counties. It usually burrows near the surface, and often finds a retreat in the excavations made by some other animal. In vole infested areas, not only is the vegetation completely destroyed, but the meadow lands, during the breeding seasons, are sometimes so thickly set with nests,—each containing five to seven young—that considerable difficulty is thereby experienced in cutting down any surplus crop which the spoilers may have left. The Vole's natural enemies—the weasel, stoat, owl and crow—are alone able to keep its increase within due bounds, and lovers of sport make a great mistake when they reduce these benefactors to the verge of extinction. A reaction is sure to set in, with more or less intensity, and that generally from some very unexpected quarter.

Red Vole.—(Arvicola riparia).—Rare in this parish, though it occasionally becomes so plentiful in the lower districts as to be very destructive to newly planted larches.

Common Hare.—The "Maukin" of the Scotch. (Lepus timidus).—It is not now so abundant over the parish as it formerly was. This is, no doubt, owing to the greater privileges extended by the recent Ground Game Act. Otherwise the extirpation of hawks and foxes would have been favourable to a general increase. During the nuptial season, it is rather pugnacious and shows no little courage when fighting with rivals within its own territory. Depending for safety from enemies on great fleetness,

the hare never becomes fat, however well it may be supplied with food.

RABBIT.—(Lepus cuniculus).—Originally the rabbit is said to have been introduced to this country from Spain, and previous to the commencement of the present century, it was unknown in Nairn and Moray, where at first the proprietor of Pitgaveny even carefully protected it. At Glenferness large numbers occur of different colours—black, brown, white and grey, but are without doubt the lineal descendants of former escapes from local domestication. Previous to the passing of the Ground Game Act, the rabbit often became an almost intolerable pest to the tenant farmer, but is now pretty well kept down. It delights in sandy heaths and light soils, especially where there is a suitable cover so as to give shelter and protection for itself and young. So rapidly does the little mammal increase, that, everything going well, for four years, a single pair might become the honoured ancestors of a progeny amounting to 1,274,840. Hitherto, all attempts to produce a cross breed between the hare and the rabbit have failed.

ALPINE, MOUNTAIN, BLUE OR WHITE HARE.—(Lepus variabilis). —This species is very abundant along the Monadhliadh Range, but seldom descends below an elevation of 800 feet on any of the Findhorn watersheds in Nairnshire. As the Winter approaches, the Summer fur gradually changes all over from a darkish grey to a pretty shining white, but the lips and ear tips remain black throughout the season. This transformation is always more perfect in a good conditioned, than in a poor hare—the grey being as protective a colour in Summer as the white must evidently be in Winter. On several occasions, as many as six hundred have fallen in one day to the guns of a tenant shooting party on the Cawdor moors. The White Hare is not known to burrow in this district, but when alarmed it will not hesitate to seek concealment in the first suitable hole, or other hiding place which may conveniently present itself. In ordinary cases, it simply scoops a

hollow near the top of the hill, deep enough to protect the body from the passing blast, and lies in it with the tail bankwise and the head overlooking the newly excavated soil, thus enabling it, when at rest, to observe the earliest appearance of danger from whatever quarter it may appear in the valley below. In such a situation it often lies quite close, trusting to its similarity of environment, until the immediate presence of the sportsman or other passer-by, forces it to rise and flee for safety across the moors. During severe Winters it frequently burrows beneath the snow, and sometimes forms a retreat large enough for two or three associates to live in comparative comfort until the return of more favourable weather.

Stag or Red Deer.—(Cervus elaphus).—Only a few straggling individuals from the mountains are now and again to be met with in this district, under stress of severe weather. In former times, when the old forest of Lochindorbh stretched its broad wing over the south-eastern section of the parish as far as the river Findhorn, the Red Deer were plentiful enough. A small holding, Achendaur, now incorporated with Balinreach, on the Glenferness estate, was so named by the early inhabitants from the fierce contests which annually took place on its open meadow, between the rival stags during the rutting season.

Roebuck.—(Cervus capreolus).—This species is chiefly confined in Scotland to the area North of the Grampians. Owing to the vast extent of surface now planted and forming a suitable cover, the roe is quite common all over the county. The buck and the doe seem to remain attached for several years, mayhap, even for life, while the fawns keep up a friendly intercourse with the parents long after they are able to cater for themselves. Except when feeding, or passing from one plantation to another, it is seldom seen in the open ground. When allowed unduly to increase in numbers the damage which it does both in the field and to the young trees is sometimes considerable. Some years ago two fawns were caught and brought up as pets, on separate

farms in this parish, but it could scarcely be said that they ever became perfectly tamed, and at last both succeeded in making good their escape to their native haunts.

REPTILIA.

In an exact Zoological sense, the two following are not true Reptiles, since, like all Amphibians, they possess gills or branchiæ in early life, though afterwards they breathe (swallow) air solely by their lungs.

FROG.—(Rana temporaria).—Of the genus this is the only species in Nairnshire, but it is widely distributed throughout Great Britain and generally over the Continent even as far as the seventieth degree of North latitude. Although entirely aquatic in the early stages of its history, the adult specimen is seldom seen far from water in after-life. As a rule the frog may be said to live in solitude, but during the nuptial season, large numbers congregate in almost every marsh, often high up on the mountain flats. At this time the males croak and disport themselves very freely in the comparatively warm element, and under the impulse of love and hunger both sexes become especially active after nightfall. The whole family feel quite at home in the pool, and leap and swim with wonderful power and grace. In March, every one must have noticed the small black eggs deposited by the female in a clear gelatinous mass among still water. After a few days, the curious little tadpoles are hatched in vast numbers and are locally known as "laidlacks." At this stage, each individual appears to be just one enormous head and belly, quite undistinguishable in outline, and terminating in a long flexible tail on which it depends for motive power. By the time the four limbs become distinctly visible, the caudal appendage has been completely absorbed, and meantime the froglet having developed lungs and a new appetite, it gradually assumes all the characteristics of a true flesh eater. Henceforward, it lives on worms, insects, and slugs throughout the Summer, but lies in a torpid

condition without air or food during the cold season, among the mud at the bottom of the pool.

TOAD.—(Bufo vulgaris.)—Of the two British species, this one is alone found in Nairnshire. Though common and familiar enough to most people, it is universally disliked from the mistaken idea that it is dangerous, and "can spit poison." It is, however, perfectly harmless, and could not injure the tenderest child even if it should desire to do so. The skin is, indeed, warty, and of a dirty brown colour, containing an acrid substance (phrynin) which is very disagreeable to any animal when taken up in its mouth. Coming out chiefly at night in search of grubs, slugs, and similar prey, it becomes a most valuable assistant to the gardener when his plants are young and tender. From the bright sparkling eyes, there was at one time a firm popular belief that the toad carried a precious stone in its head. Although very tenacious of life, there are few in the present day who would be ready to credit the oft-repeated stories of toads being discovered alive in solid rock, sometimes in formations even older than those which contain their early geological remains. As the result of very careful experiments on this subject it is now known that they can survive in confinement for several months under very unfavourable circumstances, but in no case for a period much over a year.

SLOW OR BLIND WORM.—(Anguis fragilis.)—By the uninitiated this pretty little reptile is invariably set down as a vile snake, possessing the most deadly poison, because the body and tail are so gradually merged into one that it presents a very ophidian-like appearance. The fang, however, so much dreaded, exists only in imagination. Notwithstanding, almost every year we hear that one or more "big serpents," sometimes even two feet long, have been caught and killed in the parish. In every case, any which have been submitted to us for identification, always turned out to be just an ordinary slow worm. It is fairly common on the moors and other dry sandy places. True to its

natural disposition, it only comes out as a rule after dark in search of slugs, snails, and such like grub, which are devoured in great numbers. Thus it ought to be protected for the valuable service so efficiently rendered both in the garden and on the farm. On the contrary, the thoughtless discoverer usually condemns it to an immediate death, under the impression that he is acting the part of a public benefactor to the community in general.

Common Lizard.—Locally, "Heather Ask"—(Lacerta vivipara).—This beautiful little creature occurs very generally on the dry heaths, and sunny banks throughout a wide area over the North. The colouring is remarkably protective, and corresponds in a striking degree with the sombre shades of its natural environment. On warm days it may often be seen darting about with wonderful agility among the heather, hunting for insects even more active than itself. Pouncing every now and again on some poor incautious fly, it only pauses for a moment to devour its victim, and then jerks itself off anew in search of another. Like the slow worm, it has the curious habit of snapping the tail during the spasms of capture, but after a time the lost part is restored, though in a considerably less perfect condition than the original. As the specific name implies, the eggs are hatched before birth, so that the young are born alive, and are capable of catering for themselves from the first.

Viper or Adder.—(Vipera berus).—This is the only poisonous snake found in Great Britain. Although said to be occasionally noticed on the less frequented hills of Nairnshire, we have never met with a single specimen, nor do we certainly know of any person or animal having been bitten by an adder in this district within the last thirty years.

Great Crested Newt.—(Molge cristata).—Occurs not uncommonly in this district.

Palmated Smooth Newt.—Eft, Water Ask—(Molge palmata)—Almost every ditch, pond or mountain pool, affords

numerous specimens of this small lizard-like creature, which, contrary to the generally accepted belief, is perfectly harmless. Not being exclusively aquatic, it may occasionally be found on the moors under stones, or crawling about among the heather and damp herbage, at times, a long distance from water. The tenacity with which it clings to life is very surprising. During severe Winters, it now and again gets frozen up in a block of ice, but, in due course, comes out again with the genial Spring, bright and active, and apparently none the worse for an experience which would have proved fatal to most other animals. But more wonderful still, like many of the same genus, it shows extraordinary powers of reproducing lost parts, and that too, even several times in succession. Once upon a time, as related in the following local story, a labouring man, while drinking on his knees from a moorland pool, inadvertently swallowed an "ask." For days and nights on end, he could feel the "hateful beast" leaping, crawling, and sometimes even gnawing at his stomach. Medicines were taken, and every doctor within reach was consulted, but all to no purpose. At last, he met a "Wise Woman" who told him to eat the fleshy part of seven salt herrings, and immediately thereafter to lie down and hold his head over a running stream, where the "ask" might hear the water murmuring among the stones. This he did, and in a few minutes, to his great delight, the vile reptile made its way up his throat, jumped into the current, and instantly disappeared in its native element. From that day to the present, many in Nairnshire believe that "asks" are dangerous, and not to be rashly dealt with.

BIRDS.

The birds of Ardclach differ in no material respect from those which occur in similar inland parishes on the Southern shores of the Moray Firth. Although the annual average temperature in this region, is a few degrees lower than that which obtains along the sea-board, the climate even in Winter is far from severe.

The existence of not a few rare insects—butterflies and moths—which were supposed to live only in the South, may be noted as an example of the general mildness. At long intervals, intense cold has been experienced, but during the Winter of 1895-96, very little snow fell, and the thermometer seldom indicated more than a few degrees of frost. To some extent this may account for the numerous feathered migrants which annually select this area for nesting purposes, as well as a contingent of Northern visitors, which generally arrive on our shores by the end of the year in order to escape the rigours of an Arctic cold.

In former times, when the great umbrageous pines of the old Caledonian Forest quite overshadowed the dark frowning precipices almost throughout the whole course of the Findhorn, eagles, owls and ravens, found an impregnable retreat beneath their branches, in the deep rocky gorges through which the restless current had succeeded in forcing its way to the sea. Particularly was this the case at the Rock Walk and neighbouring banks below the Mansion House, where these birds as well as a strong colony of predatory mammals continued to maintain an unquestioned independence, long after their less fortunate com peers had been driven out by gun, axe and fire, from their ancient haunts in the surrounding country. Before gamekeepers came into supreme power, hen harriers were the plague and terror of the farmer's wife. For many years, not a single specimen has been known within the bounds, and even the peregrine is becoming very rare. At the present time, a sparrow-hawk, a kestrel, a straggling merlin, and a few owls, are all that remain in Nairnshire of a once splendid Fauna of raptorial birds.

For sporting purposes, the broad moors are all well stocked with red and black grouse, whose natural habitats are entirely confined to the Highlands of Scotland. In every way they are carefully protected, while their presence annually brings into the country a revenue of many thousand pounds. Little do these innocent creatures themselves know their priceless value, and the

great influence they exercise on the community in general. For them, even the British Parliament usually regulates its Autumn sittings, and wealthy subjects erect palatial lodges in the remote glens, and engage armies of keepers and gillies whose sole work is to try and increase their numbers on the upland wilds by every means in their power.

Large flights of gulls (Larus ridibundus) regularly leave the coast and come up to breed in the Lochs of Belivat, Boath, and sometimes too, on either of the artificial ponds near Glenferness. Sandpipers and oyster-catchers always visit the Findhorn, and lay eggs in suitable localities all along its pebbly bed, where they bring out their young in comparative safety. The former are true "birds of passage," resting with us for a brief period on their way further North in Spring, and again while returning to the South in the following Autumn.

Of the smaller sylvan tribes there are considerable numbers, and if the benefits they confer on the farmer were better understood, they would be more encouraged than they now are. True, at times, they do some visible harm to the crops in the garden and field, but the compensation they secretly render in freeing the soil and plants from injurious insects, is both manifold and effectual. Very few among them have a definite song, but all, in proclaiming their natural delight, can chirp, twitter or chatter in an endless variety of pleasant sounds. In most cases these utterances are sufficient indications to distinguish the individuals even when unseen. During the Spring and Summer months, this wonderful power becomes more distinctly marked, as a sweet impulsive emotion in the males, which often vie with each other from shade, bush or tree-top, in trying to captivate the esteem and affection of some shy lady-love, in view of entering upon the all important domestic duties connected with the happy nuptial season.

Missel Thrush.—(Turdus viscivorus)—"Stormcock" and "Hielan' Piet."—The largest of the family, and probably occurs,

at the present time, in greater numbers along the Moray shores than in any other part of Great Britain. Locally classed among the destructive birds, it is regularly persecuted by the gardeners, who maintain that it often causes considerable loss during the fruit season. In general, it is very shy and wary, but when breeding, it becomes even aggressively pugnacious, clamorous and bold, beyond most other species in defence of eggs or nestlings. By the Autumn, they congregate here in large scattered flocks, ranging over the open country in search of worms, snails, and insects of all kinds. As the season advances, however, the society gradually diminishes, and finally breaks up by mid-winter.

Song Thrush.—(Turdus musicus)—"Throstle," "Mavis," "Mavie."—Resident all the year, and well-known wherever there is any plantation, or natural brushwood, sufficient for concealment or convenient shelter. In figure, song, and habits, the throstle is every inch a veritable thrush, and ranks high as a British melodist. His lay is pre-eminently happy and strikingly varied every now and then, with the pretty refrain, "Cheer up, cheer up, cheer up," which may be taken as the key-note and purpose of his song during the Spring and Summer months. Singing at intervals from early dawn to late at night, his evening carols always appear to be the richest and best, owing, no doubt, to the calm and witching influence of the gloaming hour. Differing from every other structure of the kind, the nest is plastered on the inside with mud, or even cow-dung, which forms a cork-like lining, and becomes very hard when dry. The mavis persistently searches the meadows for earthworms, often impressing us by its actions that it relies more on the sense of hearing than that of sight, for the discovery of its favourite prey.

Redwing.—(Turdus iliacus).—A Winter visitor from Northern Europe, but generally mistaken for the foregoing species. We are not aware that any ever remained to breed in this district.

Fieldfare.—(Turdus pilaris).—This is a better known migrant than the former—first in October on its way South, and

again about the end of April, when returning to its Summer home in the Norwegian forests.

Blackbird.—(Turdus merula)—"Blackie."—Abundant, and generally resident throughout the year, but more numerous in the lower reaches than on the uplands. The gardener and he do not always live on the most friendly terms, for in addition to slugs, snails, and insects of all kinds, Blackie greedily devours his strawberries, cherries, currants, and even gooseberries. On the slightest challenge he dashes off with a loud aggrieved protest, and takes refuge for the time in the thickest evergreen shrubbery that may be conveniently within his reach. Most persons will agree that our three finest local songsters are the mavis, blackbird, and lark, although, in the character of their respective strains, they each differ so widely that there is no possible comparison. The blackbird sings chiefly in the morning and evening hours, in a quiet melodious tone. The performance is far from perfect, though at the same time rich and charmingly delightful. An albino specimen now and again occurs, but very rarely, purely and completely so. This condition is supposed to be the result of some secret disease, and is often associated with a more or less sickly constitution, but it also happens that an albino appears as robust and strong in every way as its normally coloured companions. The blackbird may be easily recognised even at some distance, or in a bad light, from the peculiar habit of sharply raising its tail, the moment it settles from flight. In this parish we can find no proof that the blackbirds ever suck birds' eggs.

Ring Ouzel.—(Turdus torquatus).—There are few localities in Nairnshire where a pair or more may not be seen at some part of their sojourn here, but they nest only in the higher area along the Monadhliadh Range. They are the only thrushes which are entirely absent from the British Isles during the Winter. After their arrival in April, the Mountain Blackbirds, as they are called, begin to come down in July to the gardens, where they

often do considerable damage, especially among the strawberry plots. In August 1885, a pair visited the Schoolhouse garden every day, and freely shared our various fruits.

COMMON WHEATEAR.—(Saxicola œnanthe).—A welcome Spring visitor. It arrives in Nairnshire from the South about the first of April, and seems to prefer the moors and stony uplands, to the cultivated flats. Though widely diffused over the British Isles, it is rather a local bird. The plumage is clearly marked grey, black and white, and is sure to attract attention as the owner flits along, showing from time to time the snowy rump which conferred the English name in a corrupted form. The nest is usually made in a hole under a stone, sometimes in a rough cairn, or occasionally well back in an old rabbit burrow.

WHINCHAT.—(Pratincola rubetra).—This species arrives from the South about the beginning of May. It is never very common here, but a pair or two may be seen almost any year, wherever there is low scrub, or coarse rank herbage on the moors, or sloping banks along the Findhorn. The nest is usually placed on the ground, and generally contains five or six eggs of a bluish green, slightly speckled with dull red.

STONECHAT.—(Pratincola rubicola).—Resident all the year, but far from common—the parish, probably, seldom containing more than half-a-dozen pairs or so. When the nest is approached the parents become greatly excited and show the keenest distress.

REDSTART.—(Ruticilla phœnicurus).—The male is one of the most beautiful of our small birds, and although rather local as a Summer visitant in these Northern parts, the redstart has always been, in our experience, a pretty common species in Ardclach. For four years, 1891-5, a pair regularly returned on their annual arrival, about the beginning of May, to the letter box on the roadside at Airdrie, Glenferness, repaired their old nest, and reared a brood in perfect safety, amid very unusual surroundings. The redstart shows considerable fondness for old walls, but is always a shy bird in the presence of man. It is often rather

difficult to distinguish the pretty greenish blue eggs from those of the hedge-sparrow.

REDBREAST.—(Erithacus rubecula).—This is a very familiar and welcome visitor at every household over the country. He is resident all the year round, being as much at home in the wildest glen, as the finest garden near the city. Of all our feathered friends the redbreast probably ranks first. Not only is he a sweet singer, but when almost every other melodist is silent in Autumn and Winter the robin still warbles his ceaseless strain: fresh, plaintive, and merry, as in the joyous Spring time. He is one of the latest as well as earliest of birds—requiring, apparently, but little time to rest. As any one may observe, each pair claim a certain well-defined area of ground, which they regard as their own peculiar property, and jealously drive off every other individual of their own species. Strange to say, their young ones, on attaining maturity are heartily persecuted and forced to take refuge in other parts of the country, sometimes, it is believed even in regions beyond the sea. Notwithstanding all the pretty legends in his favour, "Robin" must be set down in all honesty as a very cantankerous, selfish little gentleman. In order to pick or guard a grain more than his share, it is often amusing to see him among his cogeners ruffling his feathers like a spirited bantam cock, and boldly challenging the biggest bird in the company to single combat. Should any of them, however, after losing all patience, decide to resent some repeated indignity, he at once turns coward and will even flee before the feeble valour of the tiny wren itself.

WHITETHROAT.—(Slyvia cinerea).—Arriving in this district about the end of April, the whitethroat may be expected to occur, though at all times sparingly, in the parish wherever there are thick hedges or other rough vegetation suitable for nesting purposes. It usually lays from four to six eggs. Those in my collection were found in a dense tangle near the Mansion-House of Glenferness.

Golden-Crested Wren.—(Regulus cristatus).—A widely distributed species and resident in Ardclach all the year. Although not really a wren it is generally known by that name, and has the honour of being the smallest British bird. Concealing itself, if at all possible, among the thick foliage of pine, fir, or close shrubbery, it is not a familiar figure. The nest is usually suspended near the end of some tufted branch and contains from five to eight tiny eggs.

Willow-Wren.—(Phylloscopus trochilus).—Of all our Summer visitors this sweet little warbler is most frequently to be met with in field and wood from the seaboard even to the summit of Carn Glas in the South of the County. Although at all times a trustful bird, its simple plumage renders it less familiar to the ordinary observer than otherwise it would be. Many nests are discovered every year in the parish. They are built on the ground and lined inside with horsehair and feathers, and contain six or seven white eggs spotted with reddish brown.

Wood Wren.—(Phylloscopus sibilatrix).—Probably a few stragglers may occasionally occur in the parish, but we have never been able to identify a single specimen. Owing to its restless disposition in the leafy tops of tall oak and beech trees, the wood wren is not easily distinguished from similar small birds.

Sedge-Warbler.—(Acrocephalus phragmitis).—This is rather a common species along the Moray seaboard, but generally a very intermittent visitor in the higher parts of Ardclach. We do not know of its nesting in Glenferness.

Hedge Sparrow.—(Accentor modularis).—Despite the general name there is no relation between the hedge chanter and the pert chattering house sparrow. At almost every homestead it is well known, as a gentle trustful creature, and thus shares much of the kindly feeling and favouritism which is universally entertained for the redbreast, the lark, and the little jenny wren. Specially, it is a hedge loving bird, and builds its humble nest not only there but often in a thick, tangled bush or heap of dry brush

wood. The eggs are from five to six in number, and of a bright greenish-blue colour without spots.

Dipper.—(Cinclus aquaticus).—"Water Ouzel," "Water Craw." —Differing considerably in appearance, and still more in his strange habits, from most other British birds, the water ouzel has been well described as a "big black wren with a white bib." He is resident from January to December, and occurs frequently on the Findhorn, Meikle Burn, and other hill torrents in the parish. He is not gregarious in instincts but he limits himself to some particular quiet section of the stream, which is jealously watched and protected as the robin does his chosen area. There is no truth in the common belief that this bird can walk among the water at the bottom of the pool with the same ease as it can on the dry ground. Diving with great facility, even in a rapid current, the body is propelled in any desired direction by powerful wing beats against the denser element, but he has to come up from time to time for the purpose of breathing. It is probably quite true that he occasionally varies his diet with a few salmon or trout ova, but certainly not to the extent which about half-a-century ago raised a persecution in the Laigh of Moray that well nigh resulted in his extermination. The nest is built near the water, and usually receives from four to six eggs, which are of a pure white, without spots.

Long-tailed Tit.—(Acredula rosea).—Entirely a woodland species and seldom to be met with far from its favourite haunts. It is resident all the year, and fairly common among the birches and pine trees in Glenferness. The nest is a wonderful domed structure in which the mother sits on six to eight eggs with her long tail turned over her back.

Great Tit.—(Parus major.)—"Oxee."—This is the largest member of the tit family, and is pretty frequent all the year in the woods and gardens over the parish. Keen and restless from morning to night in pursuit of insect food, it may often be seen clinging to the branches in every conceivable position. Though

it disports a comparatively gay plumage, the dietary is varied, and at times descends to the coarsest fare—insects, seeds, grubs, and animal tissue even in a state of high carrion. The nest has been found in many curious situations, and usually contains seven or eight eggs, white and spotted with reddish-brown.

Coal Titmouse.—(Parus ater; Parus britannicus).—A very prominent and familiar species in Ardclach, but best known by its local name, the "Blue Bonnet." It remains throughout the year, being chiefly found among the fir and pine woods on the Lethen and Glenferness estates. The nest, in which is laid from six to eight eggs, is usually placed near the ground, in a hole in some rotten tree-stump, a dyke, or any such like suitable place.

Blue Titmouse.—(Parus cæruleus).—Although this is generally a very common and resident species, it must be set down as rare, especially in the Southern portion of the county—paying only straggling visits from the lower reaches to Ardclach.

Wren.—(Troglodytes parvulus).—Bright, happy, and fussy, the "Jenny Wren" is a kind of natural pet with everybody from Land's End to John o' Groats. It occurs in considerable numbers from the sea-shore up to the Aitnoch Hills wherever there is a stray birch or a dwarf specimen of juniper. A hardy mite, it remains with us throughout the year and may be observed in the coldest parts of the country—often singing as gaily during a severe frost as in Summer, if only the sun is able to show himself through the clouds. The domed nest is a large and beautiful structure for such a tiny bird, and always cunningly concealed by a wonderful adaptation to the local environments. Very little human interference by straining, or even touching the inside of the fabric, is sufficient to alarm the parents and cause them to forsake their dearest treasures at any time previous to hatching.

Tree-Creeper.—(Certhia familiaris).—Although pretty numerous and resident in all the fir and oak woods in the parish, it is often overlooked owing to its protective colouring, and the habit it has of climbing the trunk for the most part on the side

opposite to the observer. Differing entirely from the other woodland species, its whole life possesses the least possible variety, being one continued monotony of searching the rough bark, with keenest eyes, for spiders, flies, and other insects on which it lives all the year round. Although the creeper is set down as a very silent bird, it never fails to utter a low querulous note as it descends on wing from the higher part of the tree on which it was travelling, to the root of the next unexplored trunk. Generally speaking, it builds its pretty little nest in some old pine, with only a small opening to the interior, and the eggs—six to nine in number—are so like those of the Titmouse and Willow Wren that it is always a hard task to distinguish them when mixed in the cabinet.

Pied Wagtail.—(Motacilla lugubris.) "Watery Wagtail."—This pretty little bird is sparingly distributed over the whole parish. In the cold season it migrates to the sea-shore, but returns again in the early Spring. Owing to the clearly marked black and white plumage it is, perhaps, the most familiarly known small bird in the county. It frequents lea fields near a running stream, and follows the cattle for the sake of the flies which prey upon these animals. Exclusively terrestrial in all its habits, it runs very gracefully, though somewhat spasmodically, along the ground, continually jerking the long tail up and down. The nest is made, as a rule, in some hollow in the ground not far from the margin of some loch, ditch, or shallow pool. The eggs are four or five in number, of a pale bluish ground tint and spotted with greyish-brown.

Grey Wagtail.—(Motacilla melanope.) — As this graceful species chiefly haunts the rocky tributaries of the Findhorn and similar streams, it may be more abundant in Ardclach than is generally supposed. From the delicate canary tints on the rump and breast it is locally known as the "Yellow Wagtail." Every season, without special searching, we have noticed a few pairs. The nest is usually built under some rock or bush, not far from

water, and receives five or six eggs, which are grey in ground colour, and spotted with pale brown.

Meadow Pipit.—(Anthus pratensis.) Locally "Titlark," "Titling," and "Moss Cheeper."—During Summer the pipit is as much at home on the lowland pastures of Nairnshire as it is on our higher damp moors. In shape and plumage it looks like a small lark, but in reality it is a very near relation of the wag-tails. It emits a smell so strong that sportsmen are often misled by their dogs "pointing" it instead of grouse. The nest is always well concealed in a depression or side of a bank among thick herbage, and is often selected by the cuckoo as a suitable receptacle for her single egg.

Tree Pipit.—(Anthus trivialis.)—This is rather a rare species in Ardclach—appearing from the South about the beginning of May and leaving again by the end of September. We have not often seen it, but the eggs have been sent to us several times for identification. Being a solitary bird, it may not be tolerant even of its own species to occupy trees in the vicinity of its chosen abode. The nest is usually built near some favourite tree, and the five or six eggs have a dull white ground colour and almost entirely covered with dark brown or purple blotches. The shade and markings, however, vary a great deal.

Great Grey Shrike.—(Lanius excubitor.)—A straggling visitor comes occasionally as far north as the Moray Firth. On the 25th April, 1892, Mr Sinton, gardener, Glenferness, sent us for identification a specimen shot at Milton some ten days previously. It was immediately forwarded to Mr M'Leay, Inverness, for preservation, but he wrote saying—"Nothing can be done with the butcher bird. It is much too old." Three days later, the female shrike was observed flying about at Glenferness House by the factor and gardener. Another bird of the same species was shot by Mr Sinton in the garden in March, 1889, when shrikes were said to be pretty numerous about Forres. In common with the other members of the family, this bird

impales its prey—mice, lizards, and insects, &c.—on long thorns. It is not known that any ever remained to breed in the district.

WAXWING.—(Ampelis garrulus.)—A very rare visitor to this district. The late Rev. Dr George Gordon, of Birnie, records in his "Fauna of Moray" that four specimens were seen and two killed at Glenferness in January, 1869. We have no experience, however, of the bird in the parish during our time.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.—(Muscicapa grisola.)—Although this species appears to be a common Summer migrant to the lower reaches of Nairn and Moray, it is far from plentiful in Ardclach; indeed, we never had the good fortune to come across its nest.

SWALLOW.—(Hirundo rustica.)—One of the most welcome of all the Summer visitors. It takes very kindly to the farmer's square, especially in the lower parts of the county, and becomes almost a domestic favourite during the breeding season—when it is seldom disturbed. For a nesting site it frequently selects the top of a joist in some cart-shed, cattle-fold, or other outhouse where there is free access. The mud structure is saucer-shaped and quite open at the top, though seldom far from the roof. The eggs, which in ground colour are pure white, number from four to six, but vary considerably in shape and markings.

HOUSE MARTIN.—(Chelidon urbica.)—At present (1896) we do not know of any house martins building within the parish. They are very local birds and often intermittent as to their appearances at the old nesting sites. For many years (1858 to 1873) there were to be seen some half-dozen quarter-cup shaped nests attached to the cross beams over the entrance to the home square at Cawdor Castle. They are great favourites on account of the perfect confidence displayed in rearing their young, in many cases almost under the eye of the family in the window corners, where the parents are seldom disturbed by the inmates. Occasionally, however, an unfortunate pair may be attacked and dispossessed by the impudence of some lazy but needy sparrow couple.

SAND MARTIN.—(Cotile reparia.)—There are several well-known colonies of this swallow in Ardclach. Arriving early in Summer, it returns to its old quarters in some soft sand bank, as at the Bell Tower and Tom an Uin, where the old nest is repaired or a new burrow constructed according to circumstances. We seldom see any martins remaining after the first week in September. The eggs are laid by the end of May, and are from four to six in number. They are pure white.

GOLDFINCH.—(Corduelis elegans.)—This beautiful bird—crimson, black, white, and bright yellow—does occasionally pay a visit to Ardclach. Half-a-century ago it was said to occur rather plentifully in Moray and Nairn, but it is now less frequently seen. During the Autumn season it leads a restless gipsy life; always roving about over the fields in search of its favourite thistle seeds. As a songster the goldfinch takes a high rank, and in this capacity may be oftener seen in confinement than free in the open country. In August, 1882, I saw a stray male specimen which stayed for a short time in my garden at the Ardclach Schoolhouse. It builds an exceedingly neat and pretty nest in which are laid four or five eggs, greyish white, spotted and streaked with purplish brown.

SISKIN.—(Chrysomitris spinus.)—An occasional specimen is to be met with in Ardclach among the fir woods. We ourselves saw a pair flying about near the Ferness Schoolhouse, in February, 1895. As the nest is always built at a considerable height, perhaps thirty or forty feet, in some spruce or pine tree, there is no satisfactory evidence of its having bred in this parish. The siskin is a pretty, active, musical little bird, but better known as a captive than in a wild state. The eggs—usually five—are pale, bluish-green, in ground colour, and spotted with dark reddish brown.

GREENFINCH.—(Ligurinus chloris)—"Green Lintie."—In the Southern end of Nairnshire, this is a fairly common and well-known species. It is abundant along the Moray sea-board—

frequenting gardens, shrubberies and hardwood plantations. Concealing itself among the rich foliage, the green dress renders its presence less easily detected. The nest is loosely constructed in hedge or shrub, of straw roots and moss, with wool, hair, and a few feathers. It generally receives from four to six eggs, which are white, faintly spotted with purplish red at the larger end.

COMMON SPARROW.—(Passer domesticus.)—A very familiar and garrulous chatterer, not to say, even at times a most impudent bird. In the country as well as in the city, it is everywhere before our eyes. Omnivorous in taste, it has earned a reputation for plunder and rapine from the farmer's stores, but its Spring and Summer services amply repay him for the injuries done during the Autumn and Winter seasons. In nature and habits, the sparrow is hardy and adaptive to its environments beyond most other species. The nest is placed indifferently in trees, ivy, holes in walls, or, in fact, any safe and convenient cavity. Three broods are often reared in one year.

TREE SPARROW.—(Passer montanus.)—It can only breed occasionally in Ardclach. We ourselves have never found the nest. The eggs, however, are in our local collection, and they are now and then brought to us by the boys for identification. To an ordinary observer this bird would almost certainly be mistaken for a house sparrow and therefore passed over as such.

CHAFFINCH.—(Fringilla cœlebs). Local names, "Chaffie," "Tree Lintie," Scotch name, "Shilfa."—Without doubt this is the most abundant of the feathered tribes in Nairnshire. About the house, by the roadside, and all over the woods it is equally common. The male is a most beautiful bird, as well as a sweet songster—one of the likeliest renderings of his short but cheery lay being, "Toll-toll, pretty-little, dé-ár." The nest is an elaborate structure of exceeding neatness and great beauty, always compactly and securely built. In this respect it surpasses every other British fabric of a similar kind. It is usually placed in a shrub

or tree from a few to fifty feet in height from the ground. Round as the O of Giotto at the rim, the materials are blended so as to resemble in a wonderful manner the prevailing colour of any chosen environment of apple tree, hawthorn, oak, or elm. In addition to the mosses, wool, and slender grasses selected by the female architect, the lichens chiefly on the outside are Licandora virellis, Palestina flava, Parmelia stellaris, Parmelia perlata, Lastria sericea, Oria miora, with, perhaps, a few others of suitable colouring so as to disguise and protect the structure as much as possible from every source of danger until the young ones are fully fledged and able to support themselves. The eggs, too, in their comeliness, are a fitting ornament for such a pretty little nest.

Common Linnet.—(Linota cannabina.)—"The Lintie," "Rose Linnet."—The male, when in full nuptial plumage, with red poll, and rose breast, is, indeed, a very handsome bird. It is scarcely common in Ardclach, but resident. Owing to its capacity as a songster, and its power of imitating the notes of other birds, it is a great favourite for the cage. The nest is often placed among whins and contains four to six eggs of a pale bluish-white ground colour, speckled with light reddish brown and purplish red.

Lesser Redpoll.—(Linota rufescens.)—Rare in Ardclach. We are not sure that we have ever seen a specimen here.

Twite.—(Linota flavirostris.)—"Heather Lintie."—Best known in Ardclach as a moorland species, where it occurs in considerable numbers. The nest may be found in a bunch of heather, or under it on the ground. The eggs vary in number from four to six, being pale greenish blue, blotched with reddish brown, and somewhat inclined to streakiness. In Autumn, it may be seen in flocks on the stubbles and ploughed lands.

Bullfinch.—Pyrrhula europæa.)—This is really one of the handsomest of all the British finches and fairly common in the Glenferness and Dulsie woods. The full beauty of the male can only be appreciated where he is most frequently seen, among the

green shades of the clustering leaves. Although he is persecuted by the gardener, it is highly probable that his apparent destructiveness may solely originate in a search for concealed insects which at a later stage would completely kill the embryo fruit. The sexes pair for life, and even the young ones usually remain in the company of the parent birds during the Autumn and Winter months. Outwardly the nest is a platform-shaped structure with a cup-like bed in the middle. It usually receives from four to six eggs, greenish-blue in ground colour, speckled, and sometimes streaked with purplish brown, especially at the larger end.

Crossbill.—(Loxia curvirostra.)—A year seldom passes in which the crossbills do not breed in the parish. After the young are able to accompany the parents, they often assemble in large numbers to feed upon the seeds contained in the fir cones. The bill is a curious instrument, being crossed at the points like no other British bird, and becomes a wonderful seed extractor By means of it they cling and climb among the branches like parrots. When compelled by severe cold or scarcity of food to leave their Northern home, they become "gipsy migrants," and may, in consequence, be numerous or absent with us in successive seasons. In the pine woods we have occasionally come across a flock so busily engaged upon a fallen crop of cones that the birds have generously permitted us, in watching their operations, to move about among them as confidently as if we had been an honorary member of their society. The nest is placed in a pine tree at some distance from the ground, and contains four, rarely five, eggs, which are greyish-white, sparsely dotted with several shades of reddish-brown.

Yellow Hammer.—(Emberiza citrinella.)—"Yite," "Yella Yorlin."—This is one of our best known birds, even vieing with the canary in the richness of its yellow plumage. Unfortunately an old superstition, now happily dying out, asserted that "The yellow yorlin got a drap of the deil's bluid ilka May morning" in order to streak and scroll its eggs with those curious markings

which, in the idea of some, procured for it the name of the "Writing lark." In by gone days, too, the country peasant only heard in its plaintive little song the words—"Deil, deil, deil tak' ye," and concluded that it must be on the most familiar terms with the Evil One. A great improvement, however, is the simple rendering which now commends itself to most right-minded people—"A little bit of bread, and no-o cheese." Although it resists cold in a high degree, it is a great lover of heat, though it remains with us all the year. The nest is usually placed on or near the ground, among rough herbage, and contains the well-known eggs, four or five in number, which are suffused, streaked, and clouded with dark brown and reddish-purple. To me the whole clutch is a beautiful sight.

Reed Bunting.—(Emberiza schœniclus.)—At intervals a pair may be seen almost anywhere over the parish, but never common. In the Spring time it usually shifts its favourite haunts in the marshy districts, and during that season we have seldom missed observing a few individuals on the newly sown oat fields near the Schoolhouse. From the sparrow-like back, together with the white collar and black head, its identification ought to be easy. It usually breeds on the ground, but the last nest we found on the Black Burn was carefully built among long grass and rank sedges. The eggs are of a pale reddish-brown colour, boldly spotted and streaked with dark brown of a rich purple shade.

Snow Bunting.—(Plectrophenax nivalis.) "Snow-flake."—Only a Winter visitor from the colder regions, but it usually comes in large flocks seeking their food about the stack yards, fields and waste grounds. There is no instance of their remaining to breed in the parish, though, it is now known, that they have nested for many years continuously among the Cairngorms, and similar elevated summits in Scotland. The nest, lined with red deer hair, and a few ptarmigan feathers, is placed in a crevice among loose granite blocks, and contains five eggs, greyish-white, spotted and blotched with brownish-red and purplish black.

STARLING.—(Sturnus vulgaris.)—A well-known bird in this parish, especially in the localities where it chooses to colonise and breed. The plumage is richly coloured, and shows, in addition to the spangling of white and buff, a beautiful gloss which sometimes shines in the sunlight like polished metal. As in the case of the rook, the starling searches the fields for grubs and worms, and to the extent of his success, proves himself the farmer's friend. Not only is he a clever egg-stealer, but even the newly hatched young of the smaller birds are readily carried away from such nests as he can easily find access to. The variety of his notes has earned for him the reputation of a mimic, but his imitations though striking, are not very exact. In Autumn the birds gather in large flocks and execute those wonderful aerial evolutions, which enable the spectator at once to identify the performers though at a considerable distance. They build in the most out-of-the-way places, and should their pale blue eggs be gradually removed, leaving one or two in the nest, the female will continue to lay for a long time.

MAGPIE.—(Pica rustica.)—So far as we can learn, the gamekeeper's gun has left Ardclach without a single specimen of this beautiful bird for the last eight or ten years at least. Previous to that time it was fairly plentiful in the parish, but abundant in the lower reaches along the seaboard. On the 1st of April, 1896, a straggler paid a visit for an hour or so to the big pine tree at Tomnarroch, but was nowhere to be seen on the following day. In diet it is almost omnivorous: eating worms, snails, slugs, and eggs, and even carrion, as well as young birds when it can get them. Notwithstanding a bad reputation, which, we think, has been greatly exaggerated, the magpie in bygone days was regarded among the peasantry with peculiar interest and affection. Its appearance, and the numbers noticed at one time, were always significant. For example:—

> "One's joy, two's grief;
> Three's a marriage, but four's death."

In nest building this bird is a notable architect, and the sexes pair for life. The eggs are usually six in number, of a pale bluish-green, thickly spotted with olive-brown, and faintly blotched with ash colour.

JACKDAW.—(Corvus monedula.)—Being a highly intelligent and adaptive bird the jackdaw is perhaps as well established as he ever was among the cliffs of the Findhorn, to which he appears to claim a hereditary right. Sallying out from these ancestral abodes, he feeds in the adjacent pastures on worms, insects, grain, and occasionally on carrion itself. Observing that something good has fallen to the lot of any neighbouring species, he does not hesitate to join their company, exercise his genius, and levy a little blackmail on his less watchful companions. The nest—often an enormous pile of sticks—is a rude enough structure, and generally contains from four to six eggs of varying size. The colour is pale bluish-green, spotted with black, olive-brown, and violet-grey.

CARRION OR BLACK CROW—(Corvus corone); *vel* HOODED OR GREY CROW (Corvus cornix)—are in all probability only varieties of one kind. In Nairnshire, as elsewhere, they are about equally numerous. Except in the accident of colour, they are identical in size and language as well as in all the other habits of their life. The fact that they frequently interbreed and that the progeny are fertile *inter se* seems to show pretty conclusively that, barring the different shades of plumage, these two forms are in no sense a distinct species. Notwithstanding the incessant war carried on against them by gamekeepers, they manage to look after their own interests and retain a pretty strong hold of life. Greedy, cowardly, and destructive—their great aim in life seems to be only evil, with the ever present desire of doing as little good as possible. They go in pairs all the year, and unless at a feast of carrion, more than two are seldom seen at the same time. The nest is generally built in a fairly high tree from which the owner may be able to obtain a good outlook. It is always a large

platform composed of sticks or twigs with a warm lining of wool and hair or other soft materials. The eggs of either bird cannot with certainty be distinguished from those of the other. Usually the female lays from four to six of a pale bluish-green, spotted with different shades of olive brown.

ROOK.—(Corvus frugilegus.)—Owing to the custom of associating in noisy crowds, the rook is better known than the jackdaw. Although there is no rookery within the parish area, still the birds are very plentiful. For years past, in the neighbouring communities, great numbers of the young, as soon as they are able to leave the nest in Spring, have to pay the annual blood-tax to the local farmers in order to prevent an inordinate increase; but being an assertive species this bird appears to be quite able to keep up the struggle for existence under the ever varying and adverse conditions of life. Without ranking altogether as a favourite in the district, yet he is in a measure protected and allowed, during the greater part of the year, to roam freely over the fields under the impression that he is doing more good than harm. On these occasions he depends on the habit of posting sentinels, and is by no means shy: soon learning to distinguish real from false sources of alarm. The nest, when finished, is a large structure. It is always placed among others on a lofty tree beyond the reach of every terrestrial enemy. The eggs, which show a strong family resemblance, are from four to six in number, bluish-green, spotted and blotched with greyish-purple and olive brown.

SKYLARK.—(Alauda arvensis.)—"Laverock."—This well-known and favourite songster, though we regret to add, the victim of epicures, is specially fond of arable or pasture grounds. There can be little doubt that here, as elsewhere, it is growing scarcer from year to year. The song—a rapid flow of joyous notes—is permanently registered in every mind, and comes down to us from Heaven's gate as fast and thick as the rain drops in a Summer shower. In September the larks begin to assemble in

flocks on the stubble fields, but often shift their ground in accordance with the conditions of climate or their food supplies. The nest is always made on the ground, and contains from four to five somewhat variable eggs, greyish white, spotted and clouded with olive brown.

SWIFT.—(Cypselus apus.)—A well-known Summer visitor, arriving here about the month of May, and leaving again by the end of July. The swift spends by far the greater part of his life pursuing flies and other diptera in a ceaseless race through the air. Considering the wonderful speed and the number of hours he visibly passes on the wing—often in the severest weather—it is not too much to say that he could easily encircle the globe at least two or three times a month. In this parish we have never been fortunate enough to find the nest, although there must be breeding places from time immemorial. It is made of straw and feathers glued together with the bird's saliva, and contains two white oblong eggs with a rather rough shell.

NIGHTJAR.—(Caprimulgus europæus.)—"Goatsucker," "Night-hawk," "Fern-owl."—A regular Summer sojourner in the parish, though never occurring in large numbers. Every season, however, on a fine warm evening a male bird may be heard uttering his prolonged "churring" note in most of the fir woods over the district, but the stony ground, more or less covered with ferns, is a preferably favourite haunt. "When reposing on a branch this species sits lengthwise, with the head lower than the body." From year to year, on the bare ground, in, or near the same spot, the female lays her two creamy white eggs, blotched and veined in endless variety with brownish black and purplish grey. In my collection there is an egg-shell from which a healthy gorblet was hatched in due form. Finding it (1883) beside the nest, in the Dulsie wood, I carefully gummed the parts together and set it up as a very interesting specimen among my other eggs.

KINGFISHER.—(Alcedo ispida.)—The Findhorn has long been a reputed habitat for this beautiful bird, but though it has un-

doubtedly occurred here from time to time it cannot be set down as other than a rare visitor. The late James Falconer, for many years gamekeeper at Dunearn, informed me that he has more than once met with it on the river. In the Inverness "Courier," of 24th July, 1896, there is a notice, by "Nether Lochaber," of one which was shot on the Findhorn some days previously. It is by far the most brilliantly coloured bird in the British Isles. The nest is a bored or selected hole in a bank near water and usually contains from six to eight pure white eggs of a globular form.

Cuckoo.—(Cuculus canorus.)—"Gowk."—The "beauteous messenger of Spring" is always a welcome as well as a regular migrant to the parish. Arriving, often during the "Gowk's storm," about the end of April, the old birds are mostly away by August. Although a timid bird, its bold figure and barred hawk-like plumage, give it a fierce, predacious, and deceptive appearance to the smaller birds. The female makes no nest. Her egg is laid on the bare ground, and carried either in bill or claw to the selected nest—usually, a hedge-sparrow's, titlark's or water-wagtail's. After it is hatched, in order to secure the entire food supply, the young cuckoo becomes uneasy and restless until it has managed to eject the rightful owners, and thereby establish itself as the sole possessor of the nest. It has been pointed out that this curious habit enables the cuckoo to leave a more numerous progeny during her short stay in Northern Europe, and also to migrate earlier than she would otherwise be able to do.

Long-eared Owl.—(Asio otus.)—Being a rather silent as well as a nocturnal species, this bird is probably more plentiful in the parish than is generally supposed. Frequenting the fir plantations, it builds in the trees and often utilises the old nests of other birds. The eggs are four to six in number, nearly round, with pure white shells.

Tawny Owl.—(Syrnium aluco.)—"Wood Owl."—We think the Tawny Owl is, or was, pretty numerous in the district, both

from its hootings and the frequency with which it gets caught in the keepers' pole-traps. It prefers to build in the hollow trunk of some decayed tree, especially if hidden by foliage or ivy. The three eggs in my collection are from a rabbit's burrow on the Glenferness side of the river. They are pure white, and nearly round.

COMMON BUZZARD.—(Buteo vulgaris.)—Formerly a common enough and resident species here, but within recent years has become a very rare visitor. One was caught in a trap on the Findhorn island below the Rock Walk on the 1st March, 1887, and is now preserved in the Mansion House. It preys on small mammals, reptiles, birds, and occasionally on the larger insects. The nest is built on a high precipice or tall forest tree, and usually contains three eggs which are greyish-white, more or less blotched and streaked with reddish-brown.

SPARROW HAWK.—(Accipiter nisus.)—Formerly a very abundant species in this district but now greatly reduced in numbers, being rigorously persecuted by gamekeepers in the interests of sport. It preys by choice on small birds and even on domestic chickens, but its flight is always short and near the ground. In feeding, like the other hawks, it does not seem to know where the life of its victim is placed. The nest is frequently that of some other bird, and the eggs—four or five—are pale bluish white in ground colour, irregularly blotched and spotted and sometimes zoned with different shades of reddish-brown.

HONEY BUZZARD.—(Pernis apivorus.)—Only an irregular straggler in the parish. We do not know of any evidence that it has ever nested here.

PEREGRINE FALCON.—(Falco peregrinus.)—A stray specimen or two may occasionally be still found in the parish. An eyrie was built annually for many years near Balnought, in a high cliff on the Findhorn. From this stronghold we got a pair of eggs in 1860, taken by the late Hugh Macbean, gamekeeper, Drynachan Lodge. However swift of wing the quarry may be,

it is almost invariably overtaken by the peregrine and struck down. It makes little or no nest; the eggs—two to four—being laid in a slight hollow scratched on the edge of the rock. In colour they vary from freckled orange brown to rich brick red.

MERLIN.—(Falco æsalon.)—Generally the merlin must be considered a scarce species in the district, but the keepers seldom fail to find a nest during the season on one or other of the Glenferness moors. Although the smallest of the native falcons, in courage it is second to none, sometimes even striking down and killing a quarry twice its own weight; but it preys chiefly on the smaller birds. The nest is a mere hollow, usually containing from four to six eggs of a deep reddish-brown colour without gloss.

KESTREL.—(Falco tinnunculus.)—"Windhover."—We regret that owing to a mistaken persecution the kestrel is, without doubt, a decreasing species, notwithstanding the nesting facilities among the precipitous cliffs of the Findhorn. When searching on the wing for prey, it may frequently be observed to suddenly check its flight, and remain almost perfectly steady in mid air while examining the area immediately below. Feeding for the most part on mice and voles, it is an excellent friend to the farmer and ought to be carefully protected by every one interested in agriculture. In its breeding habits it often selects a high tower or the old nest of a crow or magpie, but it loves a recess on some beetling crag, where it may rear its young in safety. The eggs—four or five—are yellowish-white, blotched or even deeply suffused with brownish-red.

CORMORANT.—(Phalacrocorax carbo.)—Only an irregular visitor to the Lochs of Belivat, Aitnoch, and Boath during Summer. The preserved specimen now (1896) in our possession was shot in Cawdor in 1864.

COMMON HERON.—(Ardea cinerea.)—"Lang Craiget Heron."—Although there is no heronry at present in Nairnshire, this bird is frequently seen in the county. Occasionally a pair may

be found nesting in a tall spruce along the Findhorn or in any of the sheltered woods over the district. Generally the heron breeds in communities, but at other seasons it is a solitary bird, both on the wing as well as when fishing in its favourite pools. The three or four eggs are a uniform bluish-green and about the size of an average hen's egg.

BITTERN.—(Botaurus stellaris.)—A rare visitant to this part of the country. On the 19th November, 1891, a bittern in rather poor condition was shot by Peter Robertson, gamekeeper, as it rose from the bank of the pond near Coulmony. It was sent to Mr Macleay, Inverness, for preservation. On the 20th June, 1884, another was obtained by Lieutenant Frazer, at Loch Flemington, near Fort-George, and sent to the same taxidermist to be stuffed.

MALLARD.—(Anas boscas.)—"Wild Duck."—Owing to the increased drainage and cultivation of waste land in the district, this species, though resident, is not so numerous as in bygone years. "The tame duck differs from the mallard only in its heavier body and shorter wings, and in being polygamous instead of monogamous in its habits." The nest is usually on the ground near fresh water on the rough moors, although at times it may be found at a distance from it, in a hedge, a tree, or even in the deserted nest of some other bird. The eggs are from eight to twelve in number and of a pale greyish green colour.

TEAL.—(Querquedula crecca.)—Although at one time plentiful among our bogs and mosses, the teal can scarcely be said to be more than frequent now-a-days, but it occurs oftener in Winter than throughout the Summer. Extensive drainage, both on the moor and the farm, amply accounts for the general decrease. It is the smallest as well as the most beautiful and delicate of the British ducks. Disliking sunlight, it usually comes out after nightfall, and feeds on aquatic plants, worms, insects, seeds and slugs. As a rule the nest is built on the margin of a loch, or at times among heather on the moor at a considerable distance from

water, and contains eight or ten eggs of a creamy white or pale buff colour.

Goosander.—(Mergus merganser.)—"Saw-neb."—Only a Winter visitor, ascending the Findhorn from the lower reaches. Almost every season we hear of a pair or two, but are not aware that any ever remained to nest within the parish boundaries.

Ring Dove.—(Columba palumbus.)—"Cushat," "Cushie Doo," "Wood pigeon."—Quite a common species and about equally distributed over the parish wherever there is wood shelter. In the higher districts the numbers seldom, if ever, reach the pest stage, but at the same time the bird is no favourite with the farmer. In addition to grain and crops of most kinds, it consumes large quantities of charlock seeds, and those of many other hurtful weeds. The cushat is the handsomest as well as the largest of the British doves. When startled in the twilight from its roosting place in the woods, it rushes through the branches with great flurry and a loud clapping of wings. The pigeon probably pairs for life, and the love notes may be heard almost throughout the year, but they are specially clear and passionate during the nuptial season. Approaching his bride with much ceremony and grace, the male cheers her from time to time with the affectionate assurance, "I do love you, dear Katie," and finishes off his thrice repeated pledge with "I will love you, dear Katie, yes." The nest is a rude platform of withered twigs laid across the branches of a middle sized tree. The eggs are always two in number, with pure white glossy shells.

Stock Dove.—(Columba œnas.)—From the large numbers occurring along the Moray seaboard a few pairs have penetrated as far up the Findhorn as Ardclach, but I am not sure that I am yet (1896) possessed of an undoubted pair of local eggs. The usual nesting places are in holes in the rock, rabbit burrows, and stocks of trees—hence the English name. The eggs are two in number, but of a more creamy tint than those of its near relatives, the ring and rock doves.

CAPERCAILLIE.—(Tetrao urogàllus.)—The capercaillie, in bygone years, was a common inhabitant of the old pine forests along the Findhorn, but appears to have become extinct throughout the country about a century ago. In 1837 it was re-introduced from Sweden and is again plentiful in Perthshire. An unsuccessful attempt was made in 1882 to rear birds from eggs on the Glenferness estate. On the project being abandoned, I procured a pair of eggs and mounted them for my collection. From one or two hatchings, however, about the year 1884, in the Clunas woods, it appeared that this fine bird was likely to thrive once more in the district. By 1892 there were several pairs which were carefully protected by Lord Cawdor, and James Mackillican, Esq., of Calcutta, the neighbouring shooting tenant. For a few months in the following year some specimens were noticed in the Darnaway forest—probably by migration from Clunas—but since then none has been seen. The nest is a mere hollow, scraped in the ground under a tree or bush, and contains from six to twelve eggs of a pale reddish yellow, with brown spots and blotches.

BLACK GROUSE.—(Tetrao tetrix.)—The sexes of this species are generally known as the black-cock and the grey-hen. Although protected in Nairnshire like other game, we fear the birds are gradually decreasing in numbers. They frequent both the wood and the moor, but seem most partial to districts of a mixed character. The male is polygamous and opens the nuptial season by engaging in several desperate combats with rival cocks until—winning lady after lady—he secures the proper number for his private harem. At this time he is full of love and spirit, and nightly chants his amorous ditties to his admiring wives. Even in death he is beautiful, for, according to the old saying:—"The three prettiest dead are, a little child, a white trout, and a black cock." Each hen makes a slight nest, usually under some small bush, and lays from six to ten eggs, yellowish-white, with orange-brown spots.

RED GROUSE.—(Lagopus scoticus.)—"Muir-fowl."—Indigenous only to the British Islands, and preserved to the fullest extent on the Nairnshire moors. Pairing takes place in the early Spring —the male wooing his bride with many curious sounds, together with a strange fantastic dancing performance. He is strictly monogamous. His partner scratches a scanty hollow under a tuft of heather, where she lays from eight to ten eggs of a buffish-white ground colour blotched with dark red or brown.

PHEASANT.—(Phasianus colchicus).—Although there has been no rearing for some years past (1896) on the estates in this neighbourhood, yet the pheasant may be said to be frequent in the parish. As these birds are great wanderers, the numbers may be kept up from distant preserves. The male takes to wing much more readily than the female, which appears to trust her safety more confidently to similarity of environment than her gaily attired lord considers it his duty to do. That pheasants may thrive, there must be good cover and plenty of fresh water, but when left to themselves, unless the conditions be extremely favourable, they always decrease in numbers, and gradually become extinct. The Reeve's pheasants were tried on Glenferness some ten years ago (1896) by the Earl of Leven and Melville, but finding them worthless as game birds the further attempt was given up. The nest is on the ground and simply a rude collection of leaves and grasses, among which eleven or twelve olive brown eggs are laid.

PARTRIDGE.—(Perdix cinerea.)—"Pairtrick."—Owing to the light soil in the cultivated areas of the parish, partridges occur very frequently. Living in coveys of some ten to twenty birds, they usually feed in the early morning, but love to enjoy a noon-day siesta in the hot sunshine. Before going to sleep at night the members group themselves in such a manner that a watch is maintained on all sides against the approach of any night prowling creature which might be dangerous to the little society. When the young are hatched both parents are most attentive to

their tender brood, and in suspicious circumstances counterfeit lameness so as to direct attention to the possible capture of the old birds, while in the meantime each chick is finding for itself some convenient place of safety. The nest is generally placed on the ground among corn or under a hedge. In June, 1887, a trustful partridge built in our garden at Ardclach, within four yards from the playground gate and close to the road leading to the Schoolhouse. Here she laid and hatched fifteen eggs in perfect confidence. The colour is a uniform olive brown.

LANDRAIL.—(Crex pratensis.)—"Corn crake," "Corn scraich."—Every one knows the incessant nightly crake of this familiar bird although few have seen it alive. After its arrival in May the Ardclach farmers believe that all danger to their crops from frost is over for the season. Meadow lands and corn fields are its favourite haunts, and one or more pairs are likely enough to occur on every farm within the parish. Swift of foot and extremely shy, it is provokingly elusive among the upright grassy stems, where it can run as rapidly as a partridge over the smoothest ground. From the locality chosen for the nest, the young are generally hatched in safety. Seven to ten eggs are laid of a reddish-white in ground colour and spotted with grey and rufous brown.

WATER RAIL.—(Rallus aquaticus.)—A very wary little creature, swimming and diving with ease, but, owing to its retired nature, not often seen; yet it is pretty frequent along the Findhorn and other streams and pools in the parish. It breeds where it lives, among the coarse aquatic herbage, and lays from seven to eleven eggs of a pale creamy white, thinly flecked with reddish-brown and grey.

MOORHEN.—(Gallinula chloropus.)—"Water hen."—Pretty generally distributed and resident over the parish wherever there is water conveniences. It occurs on the Lochs of Belivat and Boath as well as each of the three others south of the Findhorn. At Littlemill it may frequently be seen feeding on the Black

Burn close to the public road, and apparently in nowise put about at the sound of conveyances or the sight of travellers. When alarmed, however, it dives, and is able to remain for a long time under water—often clinging to the weeds so as to permit of its nostrils alone being above the surface. The nest is usually placed among the sedges, and contains seven or eight eggs, reddish-white in ground colour, thinly speckled and spotted with orange brown.

Coot.—(Fulica atra.)—In Ardclach this is exclusively a loch bird—almost always on the water—and decidedly less numerous than the foregoing species. From the pure white naked patch on the brow it is often known as the "Bald Coot." In general appearance it is pretty much like a big homely-coloured moorhen, and, if wounded, will scratch its captor the same as an angry cat. Coots make a large rough nest of dried sedges, usually raised a few inches above the water. The eggs are from seven to ten in number and of a stone colour, minutely spotted with dark brown.

Golden Plover.—(Charadrius pluvialis.)—Frequent on the Southern moors of Nairnshire, where several pairs, on their annual return northwards, remain for a month or two to breed every season. After the young are able to fly, the birds assemble in flocks and migrate to the flat grounds along the seaboard. The nest, a simple hollow among heather, is scantily lined with dry grass, and the eggs, four in number, are of a yellowish stone colour, handsomely blotched and spotted, with rich brownish black.

Lapwing.—(Vanellus vulgaris.)—"Green Plover," "Teuchet," "Peeweet," "Wallochie-weet," and "Peesweep."—Great numbers visit the parish in the early Spring, and remain to nest in the marshy pastures and fallow land. The first sound of the peeweet's familiar cry on the moors, is always hailed with delight, as a sure sign that dreary Winter has gathered up his snowy robes for the time, and that milder Summer days are close at hand. If the nest be approached during incubation, the hen

steals off and runs away in the most hidden manner possible, while her lord sets up a series of the most frantic aerial swoops and twirls, in order to intimidate or allure the intruder away from their valued treasures. We are pleased to say that, hitherto, (1896), the eggs have not been gathered in this parish for the market. In Autumn, the lapwings leave Ardclach for the coast line, or migrate to the South for the Winter. Few other birds are so useful to the farmer. They devour snails, beetles, and several injurious larvæ that infest grass, turnips and oats. As they are chiefly evening feeders, they pick up not a few nocturnal insects which commit serious harm during the night. The simple nest usually contains four eggs of an olive green ground colour, with blackish brown blotches.

Oyster-catcher.—(Hæmatopus ostralegus.)—"Sea-pyet."—Every one is familiar with this noisy bird on its arrival in Spring all along the Findhorn, but strange to say, many in the parish do not know even its popular name. Owing to its bright colours—black and white feathers, orange-red bill and pink legs—some people regard it as the most beautiful of the shore birds. Oyster-catchers show a marked preference for gravelly soil, or shingle beds, often far inland by the river side. Among these the hen deposits her three eggs, which are so like their natural environments that a novice may even be looking at her treasures and not see them. I have a pair of eggs found in a fallow field on the Mains of Glenferness, about half-a-mile from the river, and eleven from the sea. After the breeding season is over, these birds return to the coast, and many go South for the Winter.

Woodcock.—(Scolopax rusticula.)—Formerly the woodcock was only a Winter visitant in Nairnshire from the great pine forests of Northern Europe. In 1860, the late Mr W. A. Stables, Cawdor Castle, showed me in his cabinet, what he believed to be the first nest with the usual contents ever built in the county. Since then, owing to the increase of fir plantations, this species has taken kindly to the country, and a nest in the district is not

in any way considered a rarity at the present time. The birds love to hide themselves through the day in woods and brakes—the red and mottled plumage so closely resembling the colour of the usual surroundings, that though visible, they are seldom distinguishable unless the spectator chances to notice the large and lustrous black eyes shining through the overhanging foliage. In cases of supposed danger, it is well known that the mother will remove her young ones to a place of safety. On the 11th of April, 1896, a nest was found in a sheltered hollow on the Tomnarroch Burn, with the usual four slightly pyriform, yellowish eggs, with brown markings. They are now in my collection.

Common Snipe.—(Gallinago cœlestis.)—Although far from plentiful in the district, a few pairs may generally be found in the spongier hollows, and about the grassy flats which margin the lochs of Belivat and Aitnoch. Severe frost decimates their numbers by cutting off the usual food supplies. Early in April, after pairing, the males begin their curious aerial performances and produce the peculiar sound known as drumming or bleating, hence the name "heather bleater." This they continue until the young are hatched. The snipe is a marsh breeder, and makes a very simple nest, usually in the side of a tuft of bog grass. Four eggs—large for the bird—are laid, of a yellowish or greenish white, and blotched with several shades of brown.

Common Sandpiper.—(Totanus hypoleucus.)—The shingly margins of the Findhorn and Meikle Burn are the favourite Summer haunts of our local sandpipers, where they are frequent enough. Although living in pairs in the most secluded spots, they are lively, restless little creatures, always running or flitting along the river margin. Both old and young swim with great ease, and, to escape danger, will dive as readily as a duck or a water hen. In her anxiety to divert attention from her eggs or young, the mother often displays wonderful strategy—fluttering along the surface like a wounded bird. The nest, which is

generally a fairly substantial structure, is always near the water, and contains four pear-shaped eggs, but somewhat bigish considering the size of the bird. For the most part they are reddish white, and minutely spotted with two shades of brown.

Common Redshank.—(Totanus cálidris.)—A fairly common Summer species, reaching the nesting grounds on the moors in April from the shore. Early in Autumn, or as soon as the young are able for the journey, they return to the seaside—many going south for the Winter. The redshank is a very vigilant and clamorous bird. The nest, usually on a green spot, is a slight depression scantily lined with dried grass and, mayhap, a few leaves. Four eggs are laid, of a yellowish-grey ground colour, blotched and dotted with purplish-brown.

Curlew.—(Numenius arquata.)—"Whistling Whaup."—The weird and plaintive "cour-lie" of this bird is a familiar sound during the nesting season on the open moors and heathery uplands of Nairnshire. Flying high overhead, he is persistently loquacious. The cry is singularly striking, clear, and wild in character. The most vigilant of the feathered species, he is the unceasing sentinel of all the associated denizens within his chosen domains, and few, if any, fail to thoroughly understand his anxious warnings. The nesting ground is generally on the flat boggy parts of the moor. In a very simple nest three or four eggs are laid, of an olive green, blotched and spotted with dark brown and dusky green.

Common Tern.—(Sterna fluviatilis.)—Said to have bred on the Loch of Belivat with the black-headed gulls, but we have no personal or other reliable evidence.

Black (brown)-headed Gull.—(Larus ridibundus.)—"Pickitar."—A very regular visitor to the parish during the breeding season, and fairly large colonies have established themselves in the Lochs of Belivat and Boath, while a few pairs annually nest on an islet of a shallow lakelet in the Dulsie Wood. For some years (1870 to say 1875) the gullery at Belivat was protected,

but we regret to say that since then the eggs have been indiscriminately gathered by any one who cared to wade the marsh for them. This species is a great benefactor to the farmer. During the day large numbers follow the plough and pick up worms and other grub just as they are laid bare in the furrow. Fond of insect food, they show great aptitude, in the calm Summer evenings, in catching moths along the river course and among trees. The Winter dress is so much like that of the common gull and kittiwake that it is almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other when feeding in company along the sea-shore. As already noticed, the favourite breeding site is swamp or loch island, where the nests contain normally three eggs, which are very variable in ground colour, from olive brown to pale green, blue, or salmon, blotched with black and dark brown. I possess a pair, showing a green basis, and one salmon coloured egg (rather rare) found in the Loch of Belivat in May, 1893.

Common Gull.—(Larus canus.)—"Sea Maa," or "Gu."—A few pairs regularly visit the district, and may occasionally be seen following the plough in company with the more numerous black-headed gulls, but during recent years we have not heard of any nests occurring either on the lochs or moors within the parish. This is probably owing to the excessive preservation of game in all its former nesting places among the Nairnshire uplands.

Lesser Black-backed Gull.—(Larus fuscus.)—This species comes regularly up from the coast in the end of April, but is decreasing owing to the incessant war carried on against it by gamekeepers. There is a small nesting colony on a marshy flat above the Meikle Lyne. The eggs, three in number, are generally laid about the middle of May. They show considerable variety in pattern and are of a light stone colour, spotted and blotched with blackish-brown and grey.

Great Black-backed Gull.—(Larus marinus.)—A pair or

two of these rapacious gulls do occasionally visit the parish, but seldom breed here In May, 1881, however, I got a pair of eggs. now in my collection, from a nest in a marsh above Lynemore, Nothing in the way of food comes amiss to them, either on the moor or the sea-shore. The nest has never more than three eggs and often two, while it sometimes happens that only one is laid. The colour is stone buff, sparingly blotched with dark grey and umber over the whole surface.

CHAPTER V.

INSECT LIFE.

Insects form an important section of the Animal Kingdom, and may be easily distinguished from the higher orders by observing that their bodies are divided into three well defined parts—caput, thorax, and abdomen. In the imago, or perfect state, they possess six legs, and usually four wings, although the second pair, in the Diptera or fly family, is always very imperfectly developed. The study is highly educative and one of the most fascinating branches of natural science. Here, the student enters upon a vast field, and sees in its various departments one extraordinary vital chain, linked together by the most ingenious contrivances and beautiful designs. The body, too, has been strangely modified into almost every possible form, but in all cases corresponding exactly to the necessities and habits of each individual, while the brilliancy of colour, even in the lower forms, rivals the most gorgeous tints within the domains of Flora herself. In one respect there is a striking difference. On the death of the flower, its beauty immediately begins to fade, whereas the adornment of the insect is, in the vast majority, permanent, and shows as prettily when a cabinet specimen, as a happy occupant in its own native woods and fields.

Even the tiniest midge has a peculiar and interesting life history, with a distinct sphere in creation—therein fulfilling the purpose of its existence in the most perfect manner. Not a few among their countless hosts, by casting in their lot with man, have found, through his labours, an improved means of subsistence. Working in secret on his various crops, or personal property, they too often inflict serious losses, and tax his greatest ingenuity to save his possessions from total destruction. On the other hand, we find among them some of our best friends, such as the bee and the silkworm, as well as the scavenger millions which eat up, or bury all kinds of decaying and offensive matter, whereby the air is rendered fresh and wholesome.

For the study of Entomology, there is no lack of subjects. Throughout the Summer, every meadow, stream, and bush teems with insects, imparting life and beauty even to the upland wilds where the barren sod is seldom trodden by the human foot. The least observant can scarcely help noticing that butterflies, bees and moths, like birds, are continually sailing through the air, or flitting about from flower to flower, in the open field—the former by day and the latter chiefly at night. On the ground, beetles, earwigs and grasshoppers, are frequently to be seen running and jumping in all directions, or busily engaged in the preparation of their secret burrows or simply enjoying life in the happy discharge of their all important domestic duties.

Agile and playful beyond comparison, every one must have observed that the Whirlgigs (Gyrinus natator) seem never to tire of racing and circling over the glassy pool, while their purely aquatic brethren are leisurely swimming and diving about in the shady depths below. Clad in the most brilliant armour, they sparkle and glitter in the bright sunshine, like living stars in an azure sky. Now and again there is a pause in the mazy dance, as if breathing for a little to brace their wasted energies, but in a moment they are off and as frolicsome as before.

Insects have no respect for persons. They live in the palace,

but enjoy life with the humblest peasant. The Common Fly (Musca domestica), and its near allies may be found sporting and dancing in every hall, room and dingy closet over the land; now climbing smooth walls or walking across the ceiling without once slipping a foot, or manifesting the least concern as to the laws of gravitation. Not less astonishing is another favourite resort. Ever and anon, they seem to delight in tripping fearlessly along, in every possible attitude, the polished surface of the window panes. And, when the family table is set for the usual repast, they promptly sample the choicest viands the moment they are brought in, dine on the various meats, and even sip dessert from the individual inmates themselves, as they sit at meals or enjoy a quiet nap by the evening fire.

Upon insects, Nature appears to have lavished much of her inimitable skill with a liberal hand, and bestowed on them the most delicate touches of an unrivalled pencil. From these, the individual derives distinctive as well as valuable protective benefits. In general beetles are despised and avoided as particularly loathsome and ugly. This is, no doubt, owing to an old delusive prejudice, for, on examination we find that they are as cleanly, dainty and orderly in all their ways as any among the higher animals. They are wonderfully defended by a strong mail covering which, in this country, usually shines with a lustre like burnished jet. Two, at least, among our local species,—the Green Tiger and Rose beetles, (Cicindela campestris, and Cetonia aurata)—are, however, truly handsome insects, being scarcely less gaudy than many average specimens from tropical regions.

Among butterflies, the ornamentation is striking and interesting. With few exceptions they abound in gay colouring, beautifully embossed in rainbow hues. The wings are curiously studded over with hieroglyphic figures, streaks, and bands, which are frequently glossed with such a radiant metallic shimmer that the effect is often found to be quite indescribable. Not a few are prettily bespangled with iridescent spots which glitter on the

surface like mother-of-pearl, while others show markings which might well stand for Arabic characters in their cruder forms. Two moths bear tracings so clearly representing certain Greek letters that the respective owners, on that account, have been named Plusia gamma and Polia chi. Over the whole family, the diversity of embellishment and design which obtains for their special decoration and protective benefit is simply marvellous. The resemblance at times is so admirably assimilated to the objects generally selected for rest and sleep that the insect by an extraordinary dissimulation practically becomes invisible to a predaceous enemy. In their ordinary habitats these bright ethereal creatures are perfect natural gems, stained in azure, green, or purple designs, and their presence even in the most desolate wastes, provides an endless source of pleasure and instruction.

"It may be said," writes an able modern Entomologist, "that on the expanded membranes of the wings, Nature writes, as on a table, the story of the modifications of species, so truly do all changes of the organisation register themselves thereon. Moreover, the same colour patterns of the wings generally show, with great regularity, the degrees of blood relationship of the species. As the laws of nature must be the same for all beings, the conclusions furnished by this group of insects must be applicable to the whole organic world ; therefore the study of butterflies, instead of being despised, will some day be valued as one of the most important branches of biological science."

It has sometimes been affirmed that Entomology cannot be successfully prosecuted without inflicting much unnecessary suffering, and, that in all cases the study demands the death of its subjects. The latter statement is frankly admitted ; but with respect to the former, and more serious charge, we assert that the preliminary pain is infinitely less than that deliberately caused by the sportsman, the butcher, and the fisher. The truth is, that unless the student knew how to kill his captures almost instan-

taneously, his progress in this science would not only be greatly retarded, but prove utterly worthless. A neglected or tortured insect would involve much additional trouble to name and prepare, and become absolutely useless as a specimen in the owner's cabinet. When the insect loses its life in the hands of the Entomologist, the natural event is only anticipated by a few days or weeks at the most, for in countless instances, this is done independently by birds, fishes and other insects which rely for daily existence on the numbers they destroy. Still further, there can be no comparison between the nervous systems of the higher and lower organisms. Acute though sensation may be at the head of the animal scale, it gradually becomes less and less perceptive as we approach the bottom.

In the warm Summer evenings, the Crane Fly (Tipula), is a frequent visitor in our rooms, where it is sometimes chased as an unwelcome intruder. In the struggle to elude its pursuer, it has often to sacrifice a limb or two, but flies away as merrily as if nothing had happened. Experiment shows that the head of a wasp will attempt to bite after separation from the trunk, and the abdomen often succeeds in avenging impending death by stinging the perpetrator even though it has been some time removed from the vital nerve centre. But in recent times, through the general application of choloform or cyanide of potassium, the Entomologist is enabled to kill his specimens in the most perfect condition and without imparting the remotest feeling of pain.

THF TRANSFORMATION PERIOD.

The Butterfly did not come into the world as we see it during the warm Summer months. Like the bird family, it was hatched from an egg, laid by its immediate ancestor in some carefully selected spot, surrounded by the necessary food on which it might feed and crawl about until it became an adult caterpillar. Strictly speaking, in this condition it is not a simple but a compound organic structure. Akin to the acorn which incloses the

germ of what might develop a mighty oak, the larva contains the embryo of the succeeding butterfly. For weeks, and sometimes for months, this poor creature is confined to the ground, creeping rather laboriously from place to place, with no other concern than the gratification of a keen and healthy appetite. During this stage, it grows and casts off skin after skin until it reaches maturity. Having become full fed, it ceases to eat, and, by a wonderful instinct attaches itself with great care, by a silken ligature, to a leaf or other substance. In this position it undergoes a curious change and passes into a state of apparent death. Henceforward, through the Winter months it has a striking mummy-like aspect. Enshrouded as if for an ancient sarcophagus, there is no visible mouth, eyes, or limbs, and it indicates to the touch no other life sign beyond a feeble vibrating action in the posterior joints. The hibernal resting place, according to the species, may be in earth, air, or water. If dissected while in this condition, the organism presents little more than a thickish liquid mass, in which we fail to discover anything to indicate the higher order into which it is soon to develop. In due course, however, the seasons revolve; and under the influence of the sun's invigorating rays, the exterior vestment is again broken up, and yields a bright ethereal creature, dressed in rainbow hues of exceeding delicacy and beauty, but entirely different from its former self in any of the three previous stages.

Arrayed in full nuptial glory, the Butterfly is one of the most elegant and ærial of beings—almost independent of food, and capable of enjoying a wider range of pleasures, both on the earth and in the air. We now look in vain for the late powerful jaws which cut and masticated its rough vegetable provender; and notice that these are replaced by a long and delicate spiral proboscis, curiously fitted for imbibing the honeyed secretions from the hidden nectaries of field or garden flowers. The short clasping and suctorial legs have all disappeared, and, instead, we observe six well developed limbs springing from the thorax,

each divided, as in the higher orders, into femur, tibia and tarsi. But stranger still, the twelve almost invisible eyes, on which it formerly depended for light and guiding, have been transformed, into two large convex lenses composed of thousands of facets, each of which, it is supposed constitutes a separate and effective eye! Its new faculties at this stage are completely matured, and the perfect insect bursts forth to enjoy the highest perfection of its nature. Obedient to a strong parental impulse, the bridal mother in search of a suitable nidus, flits about over the gay meadows animated with a wonderful anxiety on behalf of her future offspring, not one of which she is ever destined to see or care for.

Every one must have noticed with admiration, the strong affection entertained by all the higher animals for their young. The cat does not hesitate to attack any strange dog the moment she considers her kittens to be in danger, and the hen will boldly face a powerful bird of prey in order to protect her helpless brood from its murderous talons. Not less wonderful is the love of offspring which we find implanted in the female breast of the lowly and despised insect. Both the butterfly and the moth are doomed to resign life long before their posterity comes into existence; yet with a providence unequalled among the larger quadrupeds they anticipate their every want with as much care as if they were permitted to nurse and fondle them during the earlier stages. Nor is this an easy task, when we consider the disadvantages which confront them at every point. Throughout their own larval and pupal experience they could have no possible conceptions of any future descendants, and how they are able to recall, on behalf of their unborn young ones, the place, or kind of plant whereon they themselves were cradled and fed, is a problem entirely beyond our human comprehension. Yet this duty is annually performed with all but infallible precision—every effort being put forth to discover the proper food in as safe and comfortable a position as possible.

In their adult stages, the butterfly and moth are wholly

dependent on the sweet nectar imbibed from flowers, and, curiously enough, each parent seems fully aware that this ambrosial aliment would be absolutely fatal to her little ones. She knows that they could neither drink nor assimilate it to their physical condition. From this source, however, her own simple wants are easily and amply supplied, and she is, therefore, able to devote much spare time to the discharge of her important duties. With an unerring discrimination, the eggs are laid and securely gummed to the proper substance. The faithful mother, as if now aware that her life work has been duly accomplished, resigns herself to the inevitable, and, in many cases, dies even before her ova are hatched.

In obedience to the same inherent impulse, the Dor Beetle (Geotrupes stercorarius) may be frequently seen during the warm Autumn evenings flying about in booming circles as if she were on the outlook for prey. This, however, is not her primary object, but discovering a recent patch of cow dung, she suddenly drops and commences to dig through the damp mass. This done, the work is continued in a short burrow into the underlying soil. To the farther end a single pellet is rolled, in which she has previously deposited an egg, and away she goes again to repeat the operation according as opportunities may occur until her ovary becomes exhausted and her object accomplished. When, in due course, the grub comes out, it finds itself mysteriously environed with a food in every way suited to its peculiar tastes. Very soon it grows, and becoming strong enough to crawl to the entrance, it gets, in the overlying excrement, all that is required until it passes through the usual transformations when it, too, if a female, sets off to construct similar nurseries for succeeding generations.

The nests of the Common Hill Ant (Formica rufa) are to be found in every fir wood in Nairnshire, and, considering the size of the builders, are sometimes astonishingly large. To the outward appearance they are carelessly formed heaps of pine leaves, tiny

twigs, short straws, or, in fact, any portable material the ants may come across in their journeys abroad. The interior, however, is so wonderfully and conveniently arranged for the requirements of their domestic necessities that we must allow this species considerably more than ordinary insect reasoning powers. The common hill is entirely honeycombed with chambers, cells, and passages, but the occupants appear to be as familiar with their endless apartments as we are with the rooms in our own homes. In their various movements throughout this intricate labyrinth, they depend, to a large extent, upon a highly developed sense of smell; and are able, in the darkest recesses, to recognise former members of their own community, even although these may have been absent for days or weeks on end.

In all their relations, ants are remarkable for their keen intelligence and curious habits. To maintain the normal strength of the community, the queens or mother ants are almost exclusively engaged through life in laying eggs all over the common habitation, but pay no further attention to them. Notwithstanding they are not left heedless. The workers at once pick up these precious embryos—concealing and guarding them with the utmost viligance. Not only do they lick and moisten them with their tongues, but, that they may have as equable a temperature as possible, they convey them from storey to storey according to the state of the weather. On the birth of the baby grubs, the nurses are more than usually busy. Much time is now spent in watching and feeding them with half digested food disgorged right down their tiny throats. They grow rapidly, and in due time become full fed. Like caterpillars they spin small silken cocoons in which they go off in a kind of sleep, preparatory to the final change. While in this condition they are carefully shifted from time to time so as to favour a healthy development by a judicious exposure to a warmer or cooler atmosphere.

When the period arrives for these metabolian organisms to burst their investing wrappers the attendant nurses become

greatly excited and help in the operation by every possible means in their power. For a few days afterwards the young strangers are welcomed, fed and initiated into all the mysteries of the republic, but, as soon as they are able to share in the general responsibilities, they are left to cater for themselves and work for the common good. During the Summer months they make long journeys from the nest, following for the most part, the well beaten tracks which radiate in all directions through moss, heather and grass. Owing to the building materials used, the ant hill is so loose and unstable that it proves a difficult task for the inquiring student to open up the various cells so as to allow the internal economy to be examined with any degree of satisfaction.

On removing the outer covering, we can scarcely help noticing the small white cocoons, commonly denominated "eggs." They may probably be found clustered here and there all over the interior; but no sooner do the inmates come to realise the situation than they manifest the greatest concern, and run about among the crumbling ruins in order to rescue their dearest treasures from danger and ascertain the extent of the injury done. In a twinkling every pupa is picked up and carefully located away among the secret recesses far beyond the spectator's ken. If possible they all join in an attack upon the enemy by squirting over him a miniature shower of very pungent formic acid. The effects are so painful to the eyes, or offensive in the nostrils that the work of demolition is often greatly hindered if not even altogether abandoned.

The Wasp (Vespa vulgaris vel arborea), the hive bee, as well as the common bombus, all treat their young much in the same kindly way. In the early Spring the queen wasp—the only survivor of last year's colony—issuing from her Winter quarters, sets herself at no small labour to lay the foundation of a new community. Having selected a fitting locality either under the ground or on the branch of a tree, according to her species, she prepares a small "pot" containing four or five inverted cells, in

each of which she deposits a single egg. As soon as the dumpy larvae are hatched the poor mother finds that she has very little time to spare. Her young requires unremitting attention, while the house has to be extended for their future accommodation. No sooner does she return from a foraging expedition than they all protrude their heads in a solicitous attitude, like so many hungry nestlings, for their expected allowance ; after which they quietly contract into their respective cells. On arriving at maturity they begin life as workers by undertaking the careful upbringing of succeeding brothers and sisters, while the mother wasp is almost entirely relieved of out-door labours and thereby enabled to attend more particularly to her primary business of egg laying.

Nor are the hive bees (Apis melifica), less attentive to their little ones. After swarming, their first care is to fill the new home with comb, as cradles for succeeding generations, as well as receptacles for honey and bee bread. In each cell the queen bee deposits an egg, which, in due course, produces a larva, but neither she nor any of the drones pay the least attention to them afterwards. The nursing falls exclusively upon the neuters which, in addition to collecting all the honey, devote a great part of their domestic life to this arduous duty.

The gardener's pest, popularly known as the Earwig (Forficula auricularia), so needlessly shunned by every rank and class, is a very remarkable creature. As a rule, we observed, that the insect mother, having laid her eggs, falls a prey to an early dissolution, and is thus precluded from being able to take an individual interest in the welfare of her future offspring. The Earwig, however, forms an interesting exception. Having selected a damp cranny, mayhap, under a stone, though preferably beneath some loose bark, she hides her treasures as far as possible from the faintest sunbeam. Should the situation be casually exposed, or become too dry, the attentive mother carefully removes them to a more congenial recess where she continues to bestow on them

the same anxious solicitude—often for days sitting on her clutch like a brooding hen. Curiously enough, the young ones immediately after birth become considerably larger than the eggs from which they were hatched, but excepting in size, the larvae are scarcely distinguishable, to an ordinary eye, from the perfect insect. Chicken like, they show a tendency to take refuge under their mother, and begin to feed in her company upon both animal and vegetable matter, though they seem to have a preference for the latter. Should any member within the family circle become ill and die, the survivors gather round, and, perhaps for sanitary considerations, eat up the poor remains. Even their affectionate parent does not escape their cannibalistic propensities; for when she too, passes off this mortal scene, they do not hesitate to ungratefully repay her watchful care over them during their infancy by immediately devouring her dead body without the least scruple or respect!

Not less wonderful is the parental love of the Entomophagae, or Ichneumon Flies, whose young subsist as parasites upon the living bodies of other insects. They form a very large family, and, in their general economy, are so alert that few of the lepidopterous larvae, even though they feed in concealment, are quite secure from their relentless attacks. In her search for an unfortunate caterpiller, the ichneumon mother faces the greatest dangers, and despite every defensive stratagem, persists until she has buried, with her long ovipositor one after another, the requisite number of eggs in her poor victim. By and bye, the tiny grubs are hatched beneath the skin, and begin to prey voraciously upon the fatty tissues from which the succeeding butterfly would have been evolved. So exactly, in each particular instance, does she estimate the physical condition, that the food supply never falls short of the demand. Just in proportion as the fat is formed and used up do the young ichneumons thrive and grow, while to the outward appearance, the wretched caterpillar looks plump and strong, though in reality it is a veritable

skeleton. The internal feeders, as if fully aware of the fatal consequences to themselves, carefully avoid the vital organs, and all seems to go well until the period when the caterpillar itself prepares to change into the pupal state for the coming Winter. As the parasites by this time are completely fed, and no longer require their peculiar hospitality, they burst through the skin, leaving their generous entertainer a miserable spectacle of wreck and ruin. With one impulse they all begin to spin their yellow silken cocoons, sometimes upon, but always near, the shrivelled remains, and in due course come forth the same implacable corsairs as their roving ancestors of bygone generations.

To mankind, the benefits accruing by these little destroyers can scarcely be overestimated. They act most effectively in reducing the swarms of injurious insects which prey upon our field and garden crops. One good example, among many others, is the small Microgaster glomeratus, without whose aid it is doubtful if we could raise a single cabbage. But so successfully does it hunt up, and impregnate the larvae of the large White Butterfly that it seems strange that even one specimen should be left to reach the adult stage and lay eggs at all.

For some two years, the Common May Fly (Ephemera vulgata), through the foresight of a devoted parent, is an inhabitant of the pool or sluggish stream. After her eggs are hatched, the soft banks are skilfully utilised by the larvae as safe and convenient retreats from aquatic enemies. All along the sides they tunnel numerous short burrows, usually to the depth of three or four inches; then curving round they form a second passage which leads back again to the water near the original entrance. Concealed within these double recesses, they are not often seen, except by those who are fond of fishing and know how and where to search for them. In due course the young Ephemerae prepare to change into the adult stage. Crawling out of the liquid element, the pupal skin splits almost as soon as it reaches

the dry air, setting free the contained insect. In this state they are known to anglers as the "Green Drakes" and fly slowly and heavily to some near resting place, where, after an hour or two in the warm sunshine, the skin again opens up, and the perfect insects, or the "Grey Drakes," as they are now called, rise merrily on gauzy wing into the genial atmosphere to experience, in reality, a new existence, but only for a very limited period indeed. Strange to say, these gay and sprightly creatures are entirely independent of food. In fact, they have no true mouths at all. The parts certainly are there, but in such a rudimentary form as to be quite unfit for feeding purposes. The Ephemerae have now only one object in life, and in the discharge thereof, they collect, towards sunset, in dense swarms above, or near the still water, where, for an hour or two, they reel and flit about in happy concord, like so many living pearls in a mazy dance. During these sportive moments the females zealously drop their eggs into their former element, and thus, without even seeing their young ones, provide a new race to follow the generation just passing away. No sooner is this duty accomplished, than the poor mothers begin to sicken, and die in the midnight chill on the very day on which they attained their perfect condition.

Against the insect tribes countless enemies maintain, for daily support, an incessant and decimating warfare, and even within their own peculiar domains, strife and deadly feud continually rage. As in the Animal Kingdom "Might is right," so among insects, unless the feeble and artless were defended by some effective means of security the whole race would be in imminent danger of becoming extinct. The frequent occurence of protective resemblance among them may possibly be explained by their generally defenceless condition, and the rate at which one generation follows another. "Occasionally," says Mr Wallace, "the female is found to be so entirely different from the male of her own species as to be readily mistaken for an insect belonging to

another tribe less liable to attack than her own. This looks like a special provision to secure her against danger, during her slow flight when laden with eggs, and particularly so, when her attention is wholly absorbed while in the act of depositing them on some suitable plant." Large numbers, therefore, assume disguises, or counterfeit habits, which prove of the highest importance for their individual safety. That portion of the structure which is covered by the mask presents, in many cases, a striking contrast to the others. Not a few insects copy their natural environments so perfectly, and imitate flowers, leaves, bark, broken twigs, or knobby snags, that even to the most experienced eyes it becomes almost impossible to discover their presence when at rest.

The colouring of our common white garden butterflies is so arranged that no part of their snowy wings is exposed when asleep. In settling on a blossom to imbibe its nectar, the upper surface is usually more or less open, and the white shows strongly, but then the individual is so fully on the alert that the presence of danger is at once suspected and generally successfully avoided by a prudent flight. These and other allied insects are very particular in choosing their sleeping places, and may be often observed trying one situation after another before finally settling down for the night.

The beautiful Orange Tip (Anthocharis cardamines) is a very scarce butterfly in Ardclach, but a single specimen would show how admirably it is protected by the colouring on the under wing when reposing among the foliage of the wild parsley or chervil (Anthriscus sylvestris)—a plant it seldom, if ever, visits except for sleep. On a dull day, or during an evening walk in the woods, one may occasionally notice our only blue butterfly (Polyommatus alexis) swaying securely with closed wings on some grassy panicle. The protectively spotted undersides so exactly harmonise with its natural environment that the untrained eye frequently passes it by quite unobserved. This mysterious mimicry is not confined to our British species alone, but is adopted to an extra-

ordinary extent by the defenceless insect tribes over the world. A common local fly (Vollucella bombylans) mimics, in a very striking manner, for an aggressive object, our ordinary Bombus terrestris. From its general appearance, dress, and colour, the pirated bees seem to be absolutely deceived. Otherwise, should it venture to intrude among them in its true character as a thief and a robber, there is little doubt but that it would promptly have to pay for such presumption with its life. Owing to its perfect mask, the female fly joins the society of the Bombi in their domestic retreats, mixes freely with them, but apparently never arouses the least suspicion among the inmates. The Vollucella passes daily in to, and out from, the nest where her eggs have been deposited, and successfully rears in comfort her young ones in the usual way. What service these parasites render in return to their generous hosts has never been discovered, but that they are beneficial, and, perhaps, in some respects necessary, can scarcely be doubted.

Most people have observed that insects often survive very severe accidents, and afterwards run away, to all appearance, none the worse. The wing sheaths (elytra) of the weevils are so nearly proof against ordinary foot pressure that they are seldom injured by it. Others (Tipulae) are so endowed with a robust vitality that they very quickly throw off the effects of terrible wounds. Many female moths—for example the beautiful Tiger Moth (Arctia caja)—will scarcely yield life, short of being completely crushed until they have deposited their eggs. During the past season (1896) one of my beetles (Carabus violaceus) revived after lying under chloroform for twenty-four hours and my single Ferness specimen of Vanessa antiopa recovered itself though exposed to the fumes of the same anæsthetic for eight or nine hours. Another of the carrion beetles (Silpha thoracica), to save itself from the attack of an enemy, has recourse to a peculiar attitude. As the thorax is yellowish, it contrasts very strongly with the black elytra over the abdomen. To counteract this

prominence it has a curious habit of drawing the head and tail together so that the upper surface when the insect lies at rest in this position, has the appearance of a rugged pebble and so, no doubt, deceives many a hungry insectivorous hunter. The Dor Beetle (Geotrupes stercorarius) confides in a somewhat similar stratagem. If touched by the hand or otherwise alarmed it immediately rolls over and stretches out its legs in the attitude of death, and remains in this condition until the danger, supposed or real, has passed away. In this way it tries to deceive the rooks which are said to prey only on the living body.

Among the caterpillars which produce Lepidopterous Moths, there is a large and important group known to science as the Geometrae. Many of these when digesting their food rest for hours on the bark of the plant on which they have been feeding. Clinging for support by their posterior legs only, the body is protruded at an angle of various degrees, and in this position looks so exactly like a tiny snag, that personally, I have frequently been misled by taking caterpillars for twigs, and twigs for caterpillars. The colour, too, helps greatly in perfecting the artifice. The little creature is so conformed to its natural environment, that birds and other insectivorae must thereby be often cheated out of many a dainty morsel, which otherwise would certainly fall to their share.

Not a few insects depend for safety on the offensive effluvia arising from their bodies. These smells, however, vary both in kind and degree. As a convenient proof of this let any one catch a common whirlgig (Gyrinus natator) as it races on the surface of some mossy pool, and handle it for a little. Very soon the skin becomes so strongly impregnated with a disagreeable rancid odour that it will require considerable trouble to completely remove it, and leave the hand again pure and sweet as before.

Perhaps, among all our local Neuroptera, there is not a more beautiful insect than the Lace Fly (Chrysopa vulgaris.) Coming

out only when the day light begins to fade, it may be noticed floating slowly about with an apparently aimless flight in the still air. The body is leaf green, while each burnished eye looks very much as if it were a brilliant combination of tiny rubies and emeralds. The gauzy wings are ample and glossed all over with ever changing shades of lovely green or delicate pink, according to the angle at which the light falls on them. Such an attractive creature would certainly become an easy prey to its many natural enemies were it not protected by a peculiarly disagreeable smell which taints the fingers and renders it very unpalatable to all save the grossest animal tastes.

The large black ground beetles which may frequently be found under stones, or fallen trees, all belong to the Carabidae Family. Popularly they are avoided as ugly ill-omened creatures, but to any one making a careful and unprejudiced examination, they are seen to be rather handsome in physical structure, as well as active and elegant in all their movements. As the wings, which normally lie folded under the elytra, are often either entirely wanting or present only in a very rudimentary state, the owners are incapable of flight, and so, to a considerable extent, are at the mercy of their keen predatory foes. To compensate them for this absent means of defence, these beetles, when alarmed, have a rather disagreeable habit of ejecting from their mouths, on their assailants, a dark fetid saliva, which powerfully defiles the human skin and renders them most unpalatable prey to a great majority of insect hunters.

Among the insects which are able in a high degree to take care of themselves as well as their property from the attacks of powerful enemies, are the ordinary bees and wasps. For their size, they are entitled to take rank as "the bravest of the brave." Not only are they armed with a formidable weapon of offence, but endowed with the will to use it. The fiercest animals, from dire experience exhibit marked signs of unusual anxiety, the moment they find themselves within sound of either the one or the other.

To the hum of the bee, as it flits from flower to flower in search of sweet nectar, we listen with delight, but when its cousin the wasp takes a fancy solely from curiosity to study our personal appearance, or even explore good naturedly, the arrangements of our sitting room, we immediately feel rather apprehensive, and usually seek safety by a prudent retreat. The least irritation, moreover, either real or fancied on these occasions, is quite sufficient to rouse its fiery passions, and, heedless of all consequences, it does not hesitate to charge and sting the lord of creation himself. Nor is such a tiny enemy to be lightly despised. To a few persons the pain which it is able to inflict is insignificant, but most people suffer more or less severely ; and instances are not wanting in which the virus has proved fatal both to man and beast. The Bible student will remember that, under Providence, the hornet (Vespa crabra) was sent out among the ancient Canaanites, in the Israelitish interest, and effectually subdued the scattered remnant who sought safety among the mountains and rocky fastnesses over the Promised Land.

Although, during the Summer months insects are to be heard continually humming, buzzing, or chirping by meadow, stream, or wood, yet in the true sense, they have absolutely no vocal powers whatsoever. The sound is entirely due to the action of some external organs such as wing or limb. Let these be removed, and with one exception (Death's Head) the insect becomes forever silent.

When at home, and engaged in the discharge of its domestic duties, the hive bee produces a low pleasing drone of contentment. Should the ear be held near to the portal entrance, after nightfall, this humming sound may be heard in full chorus, as the assembled inmates move about among the combs after the day's work ; but whenever a smart tap is applied to the flight-board an angry response is at once returned. A short pause ensues. Scouts are immediately dispatched to reconnoitre ; and the listener would do well to remember the old saying slightly

altered—that he who taps and runs away, may come to tap another day. But in general they are so engrossed, each in its special sphere, that the community seldom attempts to molest any one unless it has been previously interfered with.

Every bee master is well acquainted with the royal premonitory "quacking" sound set up by the queen a day or two before swarming. This shrill petulant note is always distinctly heard above the general hum in the hive. In due course, the "casting" bees, accompanied by the leader, leave the old home and proceed to form a new colony. Henceforward, during that season her Majesty ceases to proclaim her regal state, and settles down to discharge those all important maternal duties which now devolve upon her as head of the commonwealth.

The Death's Head Moth (Acherontia atropos) has long been known to produce an alarm note, which, curiously enough, it was also able to do while in the pupal stage. Generally, it is a mute insect, but when gently handled, or placed in confinement, it gives out a clear plaintive noise somewhat resembling the low squeaking of a mouse. Hitherto, no one has been successful in discovering the true cause. Scarcely less striking is the image of a human skull which is clearly depicted on the thorax. To the modern Entomologist, these peculiar characteristics are simply interesting from a scientific point of view, but in a superstitious age they caused the insect to be regarded with universal terror, and always acknowledged as a sure "harbinger of famine, disease, and death" in the district where it occurred.

The common female Gnat (Culex pipiens) is a decidedly unwelcome companion to discover in the bedroom, when one has just retired to rest, on a warm Summer night. After once tasting living blood, she develops that familiar "piping" sound which, most people have learned to their cost, is only indicative of an ardent desire to again drink at the physical "river of life." The deeper notes are produced by the rapid vibration of the wings but the higher tones are due to minute membranes of the

thoracic entrances of the air-tubes. In proportion as the temperature rises, the keener does her appetite become, while both the sound and the power of flight are correspondingly increased.

From painful experience, the horse, the ox, as well as other ruminant animals, at once recognise the dull trumpeting of the Gad Fly (Tabanus bovinus) and seek safety, if at all possible, by an immediate retreat. The Blue Bottle, or Meat Fly (Calliphora erythrocephala) is a peculiarly bold and noisy insect. It enters a room, in full confidence, with that loud buzzing note so well known to every one. The female especially, seems to delight in showing off her wing powers, but, on the first opportunity, will alight on a piece of cold meat, suck the juices and deposit her eggs or "fly blows." From these, in a short time, will issue those white dumpy maggots whose sole business is to eat up the flesh and thereafter develop into perfect insects. Although in this respect the Meat Fly is always reckoned a household pest, yet if she could be induced to confine her attentions to refuse and putrid matter outside, her services would be of the greatest value in helping to purify and sweeten the tainted atmosphere.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLACE NAMES OF ARDCLACH.

"It has been truly asserted by the Botanist," says the learned Mr Taylor, "that the wild flowers of a district among which he delights to revel have survived the conquest of empires, and even the devastating forces of nature herself which are fatal to almost everything else. Invading hosts may reduce a nation to bondage and completely destroy the crops on which they depend for subsistence, but the flora of the soil, as well as the local names of mountain, stream, or lowly home-stead, defy his utmost efforts to disturb. Seldom is a people completely exterminated. The proud conqueror leaves 'of the poor of the land' to till the glebe anew, and these enslaved outcasts, though they may hand down no memory of the splendid deeds performed by their country's heroes, yet retain a most tenacious recollection of the names of villages and fields which their own ignoble ancestors occupied, and near which their fathers were interred—and thus, as our Celtic ancestors, in the ages long gone by have left no written record, our knowledge of them would be a complete blank, were it not that the places where they sojourned still bear traces sufficient to enable us to discover the outlines of their history. The hills, the valleys, and the rivers are, in fact, the only writing

tablets on which our unlettered forefathers have indelibly inscribed much of their social condition." And so, to this day, their names stand up before us as the monumental inscriptions of the rude generations, long since passed away. Usually, they consist of the most primitive words, and form the earliest trustworthy records of the district to which they refer. From not a few of the ancient Place Names in our own parish, we are able, pretty correctly, to guess the amount of arable and pasture land, the state of agriculture, and even the density of the population, which, as calculated from these data, is estimated to have been very small and scantily distributed over the county.

Although Gaelic is now very little spoken in Nairnshire, yet some four-fifths of the natives may be set down as purely Celtic. With few exceptions, every hill, stream, and cosy farm-stead, bears to have received its distinctive appellation when the ancient tongue was the common medium of intercourse all over the land. To the mental perception of our early forefathers each name was clearly descriptive of the particular object indicated, but in our day the succinct record conveys no better signification to the majority than if it were uttered in Chinese or ancient Sanscrit. Notwithstanding, we often manifest an innate curiosity to find out the original import, in order that we may muse over any artificial modifications brought about by an ever advancing civilisation.

The pleasure to be obtained from this pursuit is greatly circumscribed by ignorance of a language which would not only reveal the true meaning of most topographical names, but even supply a valuable key to unlock the secrets of many others occurring in other parts of the world. Not a few local words, such as cairn, loch, glen, and strath, have become almost part of the English language, and the addition to this stock would not be very cumbersome to enable most of us to view a variety of landscapes with a clearer intelligence which would render the memory of them more interesting and permanent. As in the Vegetable

Kingdom, the privileged eye of the botanist detects the choicest flowers even in profusion on the waste moorland or the brown hill side, so also in this new and varied department of Place Names, the student of Philology, aided by the Gaelic, finds a rich and pathetic poetry as warm in feeling and true to Nature as anything that Shakspeare or Milton ever sang.

These proper nouns are, in no case, mere empty sounds. It is clear that the chief reason for conferring a name in any particular instance, would be some outstanding peculiarity of position, size, shape or colour. Laying hold of some general characteristic, the natives would try to describe it as exactly and concisely as possible, in order to impress the mind with the object as a whole. The root, Ard, meaning high, occurs pretty frequently over the land, and is always intended to contrast one elevated part in relation to another in the lower reaches near by.

Anything large or extended is usually described by the qualifying term, "mor," signifying big, as in Lynemore, the Broad Flat; Achamore, the Wide Grazing Field; Craigiemore, the Large Rock. This termination, as well as its relative, "beg," little, is often found in Place Names. The two great parish hollows are referred to by "lag," as the Laken and Logie, each of which shows a peculiar depression in the general surface. With respect to colour, the early inhabitants thought that black and grey, yellow and red presented the most striking distinctions, and accordingly a dark mossy lakelet was usually known to the shepherds of old as, Lochdhu, the Black Loch. Dalbuie, or the Yellow Haugh, by the riverside in the Streens, has once again run wild and resumed its original Summer dress, displaying a profusion of buttercups and yellow bedstraws as in the early centuries before the virgin soil was disturbed by the plough. The Altdearg, or Red Burn, as well as its congener, the Altban or White Rill, derive their names, each from the prevailing tint of its respective waters. Within a mile, the Cairnglass, or Grey Heap, was erected, in the early centuries, no doubt, to honour and protect the mortal remains of some local

patriot whose deeds of prowess the careless historian has neglected to record for the admiration of succeeding generations. Although in bygone days the oaks must have been even common, and often of large size, as evidenced by the giant trunks still to be found entombed beneath the superincumbent mosses, yet curiously enough, there does not appear to be any trace of this tree among the Ardclach Place Names, except Daldarach, which occurs in the Register of Moray and is supposed to refer to Daltra.

That the fairy folk were greatly honoured though duly feared in the parish, is clearly shown by the two famous strongholds still pointed out: the Shean Hillock and the Tullasidh, which by the evolutionary process of language becomes, in modern times, Dulsie. During the long Winter evenings, many a weird and wonderful story was earnestly related in credulous ears, regarding the doings and sayings of these aerial creatures, as well as the pomp and charming magnificence which obtained within their strange subterranean abodes.

The words employed to describe the stretches of low-lying land are not very numerous. The term "glen," as in Glenferness, is in general use over the Highlands, and is applied to almost any kind of narrow mountain valley. The Gaelic, "dail," a near relative of the English form, dale, means simply a meadow or flattened area at the bottom of a hill, and, in many cases, near water, as it appears in Daltra and Dalbuie along the river margin. It may be observed that this word is employed in Place Names with a difference which distinctly indicates a Gaelic or Saxon origin. In localities, such as Ardclach, where the latter element was long absent, the "dal" is always found prefixed, as in the names already mentioned. On the other hand its position as a postfix, as in Clydesdale and Tweeddale marks a Scandinavian or Saxon derivation.

Considering the undulating character of the parish, there are few lochs—Loch-an-Tutach, Belivat and Boath being the chief. As every one knows the name loch is spelt in three different ways

within the United Kingdon—England, Scotland and Ireland having each a form peculiar to itself. Loch is simply a modification of "lag," which signifies a depression in elevated land, but in this case, always filled with water. The word is in common use and seldom found in any obscure spelling.

Leaving out of count the Lowland herdsmen who came up to the district from year to year, in bygone ages, and erected their temporary Summer huts on the various pasture runs, the resident population, as indicated by the Place Names, must have been very sparse, indeed. The name, Shenval—the Old Town—would imply that the rude hamlet which formerly stood near Fleenasmore may have existed some time previous to the other settled dwellings, and may possibly be the oldest inhabited spot in the parish. The root word, "Bal," enters into the composition of a great many homestead names, such as, Balmoral, Majestic Town ; Balmore, the Big Town ; Balinriach, (New Inn), Heather Town ; Balintore, the Home of the Dewar or Church Officer, and so on.

ACHAGOUR—Achagobhar, the Field, or Pasture of the Goats. (Ach, a field, and Gobhar, a goat ; akin to the Latin, ager and caper.) Goats are mentioned in history as domestic animals at a very early period. From the days of the patriarchs downwards, and until within a century or two ago, they were kept in greater numbers than they now are, and contributed not a little to the wealth and daily support of the rural inhabitants in this country. They are among the best rock climbers, and adapt themselves with great facility to every condition of climate and pasture. In Ardclach, a considerable area was appointed to them in particular. During the superstitious ages, our forefathers pictured the goat, not only as the agent by which witches rode through the air to their midnight revels, but also as the form in which His Sable Majesty occasionally presented himself to his deluded votaries.

ACHAMORE—Ach a mòr, the Big Field or Pasture Run.

ACHANDAR—Ach nan tarbh, the Field of the Stags. (Akin to the Latin, taurus, a bull.) Formerly a mooral croft, but now partly

included in the pasture of Balinriach or the New Inn. Long ago, when this district was largely covered with forest on the South-East of the Findhorn, it was noticed that the red stags, in considerable numbers, were annually in the habit of leaving their Alpine retreats during the rutting season for this woodland glade. Here, in fierce and prolonged combats, they settled their respective amorous jealousies, and thereafter returned, in pride and self-sufficiency, to discharge the duties of life amid their natural environments on the higher grounds.

ACHAVELGIN—Ach a mheallagan, the Pasture Run of the Bald Height. Mayhap, the name is derived from, Ach a bhealachan, the Flat of the Little Pass, and if so, it must refer to the narrow glenlet which runs from here down to the Laken. This depression was used from time immemorial as an easy communication between the upper and lower sections of the parish.

ACHAVRATE—Ach a bhradhaid, the Field of the Sedges. These plants grow mostly along the margins of shallow lochs and the muddy parts of marshy land. Few cattle, from choice, care to browse on any of the genus. Occasionally the poor cottar twisted them into a serviceable rope for temporary use, but the Bottle Sedge (Carex ampullacea), was largely used over the Highlands in the manufacture of a rude kind of horse collar called a "Brecham."

ACHNABEOCHAN—Ach nam beathaicheam (beochan), the Field or Pasture Run of the Cattle. The district has always been noted for a rich moorland herbage. Low and well sheltered, it is considered the best for Highland cattle on the Glenferness estate. Without the pasture the arable portion of the farm would be of little value.

ACHNATONE—Ach na tóin, the Posterior Field, i.e., at the Backside (of the moor.) In the same way, Finisterre in Spain.

AIRDRIE—Ard ruith, the High Run of Pasture. Ard, high; Aird, height; akin to Latin Arduus, and Sanscrit Radh, to raise.

AITNOCH—Aitionnach or Aitneachain, the Place or Area abounding in Juniper. So plentiful did the shrub once grow

here, that an old man informed me that he remembered two bachelor brothers who spent a long life in a small black hut not far from the present farm house. They were said never to have burnt any other kind of fuel. One long Winter evening, as Donald and Sandy sat together enjoying, in silence, the warm glow of their fire, a bright thought came across the mind of the younger that their worldly comfort would be greatly increased if they could only arrange to keep a cow. After cautiously detailing the particulars of this happy idea for his brother's approval, the reply he received was as prompt as it was decisive—"No, no, Sandy," said he, "where there is a coo there must be a wife, and where there's a wife there's sure to be strife; no, no, my man, she'll no hear o' ye getting a coo." Gradually a curious change appears to have taken place. The Ardclach holding is in reality Little Aitnoch, to distinguish it from the Meikle Aitnoch in the neighbouring parish of Edinkillie, although the former is now more than double the size of the latter from the incorporation at various times of the surrounding crofts of Balacroagh, Balafreish, Rearple and Sgeodag.

ARDCLACH—Ard chlach, the Height of Stones. Chlach, is the genitive plural of Clach, a stone; akin to the Latin arduus and calculus. This name is quite in accordance with the excessive number of small stones which are found mixed up with the soil in all parts. The average elevation of the parish may be about 650 feet. The name appears to have first been applied to the hill near where the Church stands, and afterwards was extended to the entire ecclesiastical parish.

ALT AN FUARAN BHAIN—The Burn of the White or Clear Well.

ALT BADAN—The Burn dotted with clumps of Trees (Birch or Alder).

ALT DEARG—The Red Burn. The name was conferred from the water being more or less tinted with the salts of iron found in the soil surrounding the upper springs.

ALT LUIDH—Alt laogh, the Burn of the Calves or Fawns; akin to the Irish laogh, Welsh ilo, and Cornish loch. During the lambing season the ewes on the Lynemore pasture even at the present day frequently resort to this kindly hollow before giving birth to their young.

ALT N AIRIDH—The Burn of the Shieling. In bygone days, the shady banks of this romantic stream were annually chosen as the site of a Summer shieling, in connexion with a mode of life now almost entirely forgotten. This temporary abode was a very rude structure, erected on the hill pastures by the farmers in the lower districts, and always composed of the simplest and readiest materials. Generally speaking, the natives were not very particular, even in Winter, as to the comfort of the dwelling they occupied for the greater part of the year, but if the Bothain Airidh, as it was called, fairly defended the family against wind and rain, it was considered quite sufficient. When situated far away among the upland glens, it became necessary for every member of the household, after planting the potatoes and casting the peats, to remove thither. On these occasions they drove up the remainder of their flocks and herds, with as much of daily store as they considered necessary till the time of their return at the end of the season. During the day the men spent their time among the cattle on the hill side, while the women were fully employed in milking the cows and feeding the calves brought down to the Buaile in the vicinity of the Bothain, as well as in the preparation and storage of the dairy produce. Amid these scenes, lads and lasses passed some of their happiest days, and here, too, "many a Celtic beauty trimmed her snood and trilled a song to please her swain." To not a few of the exciting experiences at these hill shielings are we able to trace the original of some of the finest pastoral songs and old-world traditions. Many of them occupy a foremost place in a very pleasing literature, descriptive of the Celtic social condition at a period not so far removed from the present time.

BALFREISH—The Town of the Thicket. Bal, or Baile was originally a Place or a Home; Phris, the Genitive of Preas, a shrub.

BALINRIACH—Baile an fh'raoch, the Town of the Heather; now generally known as the New Inn.

BALINTORE—Baile an deoradh, the Home of the Dewar. In the ancient Celtic Church this was an officer, corresponding somewhat to the modern beadle. His duty was to wait on the priest and discharge the usual servile functions in connexion with the local chapel. To his care were entrusted such sacred articles as the bell, the priest's official staff, and, perhaps, a portion of the Holy Scriptures. Here then we doubtless have the former abode of the hereditary church officer attached to one or both of the early places of worship which stood as circumstances required near Glenferness or on the Hill of the Doune.

BALMAKIVER—Bal Mac Ivor, the Town of the man named Mac Ivor. Local tradition affirms that after the marriage in 1510 of Sir John Campbell, third son of the second Duke of Argyle, to Muriel, daughter and heiress of John Calder of Calder as the parish was then called, a retainer named Ivor came from Inverary to Cawdor in the train of this gentleman. By and bye, in recognition of faithful service, his son, the young Mac Ivor became tenant of this place and resided in it as long as he lived. For several generations his descendants continued to occupy holdings in Highland Boath, and at the time (1645) of the battle of Auldearn one of these was taxman of Knockaneorn. Having joined the forces of General Hurry against Montrose, on the defeat of the Covenanting party, he fled across the moors towards Ardclach. An elated dragoon, however, observed him and immediately gave chase. In the circumstances the chances appeared to be all in favour of the horseman. But just as Macivor was about to fall into the hands of his pursuer, a bright idea flashed into his mind. The canny Celt being well acquainted with his native moorlands deliberately ran over the green surface

of a spacious "well ee" which chanced to lie in his way. To the stranger's eye the spot seemed firm enough, though in reality it was a most treacherous quagmire and only able to sustain a light weight. The rider thoughtlessly followed, but he and his horse sank to their necks among the slimy mire. It was the unexpected that had happened, and the pursuer was now entirely at the mercy of the pursued. Macivor at once threw himself upon his enemy and killed him in the bog. With great difficulty he saved the poor horse and led him home in high spirits to Highland Boath. A military steed was ill fitted for a crofter's work, so he afterwards took him to the Castle and generously presented him to his proprietor, the Thane of Cawdor. Tidings of this misfortune having reached the ears of Montrose, a search party was immediately organised and despatched to the uplands with strict orders to find the young Macivor and bring him to Auldearn, alive or dead. The whole district was carefully scoured, but baffled in all their efforts to discover his hiding place, the heartless troopers determined in some way to avenge the loss of their late comrade. Therefore, entering the dwelling of a poor cottar at Balmakiver, they seized an old man of some eighty years, and, under the pretext that he sympathised with the Covenanting side, forthwith hanged him from the end of the rooftree which, old fashioned-wise, protruded from the gable of his own house.

BALMORE—Bal mor, the Big Town; relatively, in former times to the other small holdings in the neighbourhood.

BALNAGLACK—Bal na glaic, the Town of the Gully.

BALNAULT—Bal nuilt, the Town of the Burn—Burnton.

BALNOUGHT—Bal a nuchd, the Town of the Breast (of the hill.)

BALVILLE—Bal a bilĕ, the Place of the Large Venerated Tree. Formerly this was an untilled spot, containing some three acres, and covered with a natural growth of rowan, birch, alder, and willow. It was known as "The Bilĕ," from a stately mountain

ash which stood in the centre. The "Bilĕ Well" still continues to pour forth an excellent supply of water as in bygone days. It was greatly venerated for its wonderful curative virtues. The custom was to visit the spring alone, if possible, but, in any case, to preserve a strict silence in both going and returning. The devotee was required to repeat the Creed with great reverence while the water was being lifted, and thereafter to tie a linen rag to the tree beside the well. During the homeward journey the vessel which held the water had on no account to be allowed to touch the ground otherwise all the charm was certainly lost.

BANCHOR—Bean a charr, the Hill of the Large Mossy Flat. This evidently refers to the extensive tract of peaty formation on the higher elevation and locally called the Blar mor or Big Moss. In a deed of 1236 Alexander II. granted this place to Gilbert Hostiarius and spelt the name, Banchory. Four years later it occurs in a Cawdor charter as Bendachris.

THE BART—Bard or Braghad, an Enclosure on the Hill. This word is still in common use meaning a straw collar, such as was formerly used for a Highland garron. Hence, when this holding was originally reclaimed from the moor and fenced in, it is said to have had an oval form, and appeared by contrast with the brown heather to resemble this old fashioned article.

BATTANFARN—Badan Fearn, the Thicket of Alders. Badan is the diminutive of Bad, a Grove, and was often applied to a homestead near a clump of trees. In the past, the better class of houses generally had a screen of trees to the windward—chiefly bourtree, alder, or hazel—hence "Bad" was sometimes applied to a dwelling. Although the alders have long since disappeared before the plough, yet the physical formation clearly indicates that this place formed a suitable habitat for such moisture loving shrubs.

BATTANYONAN—Bad a neoinean, the Place of the Daisies. The particular species, in the polite literature of the botanist, is Bellis

perennis, often found in dry mountainous parts. This is a good example of a really common plant.

"For this small flower to Nature dear,
While moons and stars their courses run,
Twines the whole circle of the year,
Companion of the sun."

About a century ago Battanyonan was a mountain croft, but the descendants of the moles and partridges which somehow found their way thither at that time, have continued to thrive here to the present day.

BELIVAT—Buaile Ichid, the Park, or Feeding Place for the Cattle of a man named Ichid. An ancient tradition affirms that this farm includes the old Pasture Run, once in the possession of a priest in early times. It would appear from the extent of the enclosure that quantity had been given for quality. Traces of the old turf wall are still to be seen in some parts of the moor near the loch, as also a strong spring of excellent water on the north-eastern boundary of the farm, known to the older inhabitants as Ichid's Well. The priest's house is said to have stood in the immediate vicinity. The Castle of Belivat, which is believed to have stood in the hollow a little to the north-west of the present farm house, was destroyed by fire during a deadly feud between the Roses and Dunbars in the year 1600 A.D. The family is often alluded to as "The Rebel Race of Belivat." They were as remarkable for their "hot temper" as for their constancy in friendship and goodness of heart.

BLAIRLEY—Blàr liath, the Grey Moss. It is often supposed that the word, Blàr, was applied to a field where a battle had been fought. This is not necessarily the case; but as the term originally meant an open space in a wooded country, the Blàr would likely enough be selected as a convenient spot whereon to try the fortunes of war, and thus come to be better remembered in the locality in connexion with the event itself than by the common name for the place whereon the conflict had taken place. The "liath," in this name was, no doubt, derived from the

abundance of cotton grass (Eriophorum angustifolium) which may still be seen ornamenting the surface during the later Summer months.

BLAIR NA TOW—Blàr na daimh, the Moss of the Ox. Tradition says that local cattle were often lost here by sinking in the spongy bog. A small horn, now in the Nairn museum, was found a few years ago, at this place deeply embedded in the peaty formation. In shape and size it resembles that produced by the modern shorthorn breed, but it possesses an inner lining as if the animal had been about to shed its outer covering. Perhaps this specimen may have originally belonged to the ancient Bos longifrons—supposed to have been the species domesticated by the British aborigines previous to the Roman Invasion.

BOATH—Both, the Place of the Huts. "The Highland Note Book" says, "this district was usually called "Highland Both" to distinguish it from the Magna domus lapidea of Both which the old Deans of Moray rejoiced in and inhabited beside their benefice of Auldearn." In connexion with the township, we still have the places where the little community housed their bestial at the white and black folds.

BRAEVAIL—Braigh bhaile, the Brae Town. Brae is the Anglicised form of the Gaelic braigh, the upper part.

BROADSHAW—Broad Schaw or Schagh, the Extensive Wood. From Middle English Brood, Swedish Skog, Sanskrit Sku. The original signification of the root seems to be a covering or shelter. It was, however, often nothing more than a "wide piece of ground, covered with short scraggy birches"—hence Birkenshaw.

CAIRN OF ACHAGOUR—Car na Ach a Gobhar, the Rocky Hill on the Pasture of the Goats.

CAIRNBARR—Carn barr, the Monumental Heap of Stones on the Summit of the Mountain. The highest point stands at 862 feet above the level of the sea in latitude 57° 31′ 24″, and longitude 30° 44′ 38″ west. It may have been so named from these ancient cairns, no doubt raised in memory of the leading

military and sacerdotal chiefs during the period when the acknowledged seat of the Royal Celtic Court was at Inverness.

CAIRN A CAILLICH—Carn a Caillich, the Hill of the Old Woman or Nun. On the east side of the hill there is a spot, reputed to have been, in Celtic times, the residence of a Nun or Sister of Mercy, and hence the name.

CAIRN A CHRASGIE—Carn a Crasg, the Cairn of the Cross, that is, at the point where the path crosses the one between Boath and the Streens. This is a common appellation for a foot-path across a hill from one place to another. Cognate with the Latin Crux, a cross, G. Crashach, crosswise.

CAIRN ALT LUI—The Hill of the Calves' (Fawn's) Burn.

CAIRN DHUI—Carn dubhaich, the Black Cairn.

CAIRNGLASS—Carn glas, the Grey Heap of unhewn Stone. The old cairn which conferred the name was removed (1870) within recent years by the present tenant (Mr John Mann.) It stood on a slight elevation in the immediate vicinity of a shean hillock, or fairy knoll, about a hundred yards to the north-west of the dwelling house. The shape was a simple conical cairn about ten feet high, but containing some six hundred cart loads of small round stones evidently collected from the adjoining grounds. After the site was cleared, a few pieces of charcoal were found among a mass of blackened ashes, but no trace of human remains was observed. It may, therefore, have been reared as a march cairn, or perhaps the builder intended it to commemorate the scene of some local conflict about which history is disappointingly silent.

CAOCHAN A BHODAICH—The Spectre's Brook. This is a small intermittent stream in the Dulsie Wood. Close beside the county road bridge over the same, there is a split boulder, known as the "Clach na Uliadh," or Stone of Treasure. Underneath, the district fairies were believed to have concealed their money, from time immemorial, in a large golden pot. Long ago, we are told, a farmer named Donald Maclucas was returning at a late hour

from a Grantown tryst, where he had been detained by his friend Hugh Macgregor, over a stiff bargain about a lot of Highland tups. On his way home he had to pass this place alone. As he approached the spot, he was rather surprised to observe a number of dainty little workmen busily engaged removing the earth from the base of the stone with their picks and spades. In physical appearance the labourers were considerably smaller than ordinary human beings, but seemed from their thin and time worn faces to be well advanced in years. Notwithstanding, each was as bright, lithe, and active as a sprightly youth of fourteen. He noticed that they wore no bonnets, and that their glossy auburn locks fell in luxuriant ringlets well down their little green worsted tunics. It was a calm frosty evening about the end of December. The half moon was struggling behind huge banks of fleecy clouds which glided slowly across the sky, thus causing the knolls and trees on either side of the road to cast brief, but fitful shadows athwart his path. "It's a very unusual thing," said Donald to himself, "to see people working at this late hour," and he paused for a few minutes, thinking over the kindliest salutation with which to greet them. To his introductory remark—"This is a fine night, my friends," none of them turned their heads, or appeared to pay the least attention. Before he could remember to add anything further, a terrible wind suddenly rose among the trees overhead, and bursting down upon poor Donald with great fury, swayed him from side to side, and almost threw him to the ground. Steadying himself with great care, he was just able to keep his footing, but gradually perceiving the true state of matters, he wisely adopted the better part of valour and hastened to cross the Spectre's Brook—a boundary line over which none of the fairy race would even dare to pass. No sooner had he set foot on the opposite bank than the gale very sensibly decreased in violence, although it still continued to blow, at irregular intervals, in furious blasts around his person—thus rendering it a matter of extreme difficulty for him, in the uncertain gloom, to keep his

feet on the proper tract. To make matters worse he had to hold down with both hands, his good broad bonnet, which at every gust threatened to rise clean off his head, as if by the agency of some unseen power, into mid-air. At length, however, in a state of great terror and exhaustion he managed to reach his own house, and it is right to add, that, Donald, as long as he lived, was never again to be found in the Dulsie wood at such an uncanny hour, on his way home from a Grantown market.

CAOCHAN DOIR—Caochan tuar, the Bleaching Green Streamlet. Here the goodwives, who had linen on the neighbouring meadow, drew the water with which they sprinkled from time to time their home-made webs.

CAOCHAN RUA—Caochan ruadh, the Red Brook. This is so named because the water is charged with the oxide of iron, much of which is deposited along the bottom in a reddish coagulum.

CARNACH—Carn an nach, the Cairn of the Horses. Only part of this farm is in the parish of Ardclach. The hill was justly reputed in former times as a particularly good mooral pasture. The neighbouring crofters used it as a commonty, to which they drove their hardy garrons for several months, after the Spring and Summer work was over. The ruins of the old "feal" dyke which inclosed the area, are still to be seen in many places along the hill side. In some parts of the Highlands, it was an ancient custom for the farmers to drive their horses to a sacred hill on the summit of which had been erected a great heap of stones. Here they arranged the animals in a line, and, following the direction of the sun, they led them in solemn procession three times round the cairn. According to this Nature Worship, the horses were supposed to be consecrated to the great Lord of Day. Fires were often kindled and sacrifices offered to atone for the people themselves. The Priest who officiated was called Carneach. For criminals, it was an expiatory punishment to stand for a limited time between two contiguous Carn-fires, or to walk barefooted thrice over their smouldering embers.

CASTLE FOLLY—Perhaps this name may be a corruption of Fiodh liath, the Grey Wood. There is a local tradition, however, which states that long, long ago, a Lethen proprietor selected this spot, and began to erect a fine residence thereon. The grounds were carefully laid out, and the beech trees then planted are now among the largest and most ornamental specimens in Nairnshire. A trifling circumstance is said to have caused the laird to change his plans. The Lethen jester gravely assured his master that such "a grand house behind the sun" was only "a Castle Folly," and local opinion duly indorsed the statement. In deference, therefore, to the wisdom of his fool the unfinished erection was forthwith demolished and a new mansion put up on the sunny side of the Lethen Burn.

CHAPEL PARK—This is the modern name derived from the ancient place of worship and burying ground formerly here, but the native Gaels knew it as Pairc-an-t-Seipeil. Previous to the Reformation, Ardclach is not mentioned in the old Provincial Records. Up to that time the only religious meeting houses were two Celtic or Catholic Chapels on the east side of the river Findhorn. Both the sites are still (1899) respected—the one on the Hill of the Doune, and the other on the high level near Glenferness House.

CLACH-NAN-CON—The Dog's Stone. Tradition says that this small boulder, near Crony Hillock, was used by Fingal and his jolly companions in their sporting expeditions in Nairnshire, as a stake to which they tethered their celebrated hounds during the time the party rested for lunch. The bygone generation triumphantly pointed to the base of the stone, and asserted that, as the mighty hunters' dogs were "Matchless for vigour and unequalled in strength," the deep abraison all round was easily accounted for. We now live in sceptical times, but should a link from any of their chains chance some day to turn up near by, it would, no doubt, prove a powerful factor in confirming the truth of the old story.

Clach na Ulaidh—The stone of Hidden Treasure. So far as we have been able to discover, oral testimony has become entirely silent with regard to both the period and the peculiar circumstances from which this stone derived its name. There can be no question, however, but that treasure was often buried in out of the way places, either to conceal it from enemies, or mayhap at times, to gratify the base avarice of its selfish possessors. Even to this day there are many such reputed spots all over the country. From a very remote age the peasantry continued to cherish an inherent dread of the various localities where such wealth was believed to have been deposited, and this superstitious awe fully served to protect these places from a too close scrutiny of their assumed contents. As respects the parish Clach, there is nothing very striking either about its appearance or size calculated to suggest any special connection with the supernatural. It would seem, therefore, more likely that the name may have been conferred in memory of some important negotiation connected with the well-known "riever" incursions from the Highland glens. Let it be supposed that one or more herds of cattle had been "lifted" from the Laigh along the sea board, and that the robbers were overtaken in force by the aggrieved owners at this place in the Dulsie wood, and were offered, and accepted, a sum of money to restore their ill-gotten booty. What could be more natural than that the block on which the price was laid, should afterwards be remembered in the district as the Clach na Ulaidh or stone on which the gold had been paid down, at the conclusion of a somewhat stormy interview?

Clashgour—Clais gobhar, the Goat Hollow. Irish clais, Manx clash. This long furrow-like depression in the bare moor was a favourite resort during rough weather for both sheep and goats.

Colindoun—Cul in dun, the Back of the Hill Fort. On the north-east side of the Doune, on a projecting terrace there is an

oblong patch of uncultivated land, studded with a few old birches. This ancient spot—some 15 by 20 yards—now surrounded by arable ground, marks the site of an early Celtic place of worship, and is known to the present day as the Chapel Yard. The Rev. Donald Mitchell, minister of Ardclach, in a letter of 10th December, 1798, says:—"There is still the remains of a building on the Hill of Dunearn, together with the appearance of a burying ground, as also an excellent spring near the foot, still called Tober na Sagart or the 'Priest's Well'." The church itself was a plain erection, rough and ugly, no doubt, when compared with modern structures for similar purposes, but yet consecrated in the native mind by every holy feeling towards the monk and his devoted associates. The Father himself, who was held in the highest veneration, wore a short tunic, and over it a coarse woollen wrapper roped tightly round his middle. The fore part of his head was shaved—a tonsure peculiar to the Celtic Church. Round the sacred spot ran a dry stone wall or earthen rampart which inclosed the burying ground, but almost every trace of both has long since perished. The situation of the Colindown homesteads was, no doubt, relatively behind this early ecclesiastical edifice.

CORBIE HAUGH—The old name for Wauk Mill.

COULMONY—Cul mhonaidh, at the Back of the Moorland Hill. The name is clearly in contradistinction to Brightmony, the Anglicised form of Bruach mhonaidh, which is situated on the sloping front of the moorland, relatively to the more populated part of the county. The "back" of a hill is generally understood as referring to the north side, but the Gaelic, "cul," often enters into names having a southern exposure as here. It is found as Coull, Cults and Cool.

CRAIGROY—Creag ruadh, the Reddish Rock.

CRONY HILLOCK—In former days this spot was noted for its annual crop of wild "Cronies"—the trivial name in Nairnshire for the Tuberous Bitter Vetch (Orobus tuberosus.) Its reputed

virtues date from an early period, as indicated by the generic name which signifies to strengthen the ox—and, according to the records of ancient Celtic folk lore, the Crony is one of the seven sources of human food. "The Highlanders," says an old writer, "till within the last generation, had a great esteem for the tubercles of the Bitter Vetch; they dry and chew them to give a better relish for their whisky. They also affirm that they are good against most diseases of the thorax, and that by the use of them, they are enabled to repel hunger and thirst for a long time. In Braedalbane and Ross-shire they sometimes bruise and steep them in water, and make an agreeable liquor with them called 'cairm.' They have a sweet taste, something like the roots of liquorice, and when boiled are well flavoured and nutritive, and in times of scarcity have served as a substitute for bread." Shaw tells us that the Crony, in his time, was called "Carmile." "I have often seen it," he goes on to relate, "gathered, dried, and used on journies, especially on hills, to appease hunger, and being pounded and infused in water, it makes a pleasant and wholesome balsamic drink which is so used in the Highlands." The young folks in this parish used to dig for the roots, carry them in their pockets to school, and chew them in the same way that old men did their tobacco. Their tastes, however, have greatly changed within recent years and few now know the Crony even by name.

CULUISH--Cul a ghuibhais, or Cul guith saith, at the Back of the Fir Wood.

DALBUIE—Dail buidhe, the Yellow Haugh. It was so named, when in a wild state, from its annually adorning the river flat with a sheet of bright Yellow Crow Foots—chiefly Ranunculus repens, known in Gaelic as Buigheag, or the Yellow One.

DALLAS BRACHTY—(Recently disjoined (1891) from Ardclach.) The first part is from Dal a plain. The second is from Eas or Ess, literally a waterfall, but by extension is sometimes applied to a rapid stream. The third part Brachty, is from Gaelic, Braich or Brach,

malt, and often indicates a place where an illicit still had been erected. Lachlan Shaw explains this name as Dail-uis, the Watered Dale. Mr Macbain, Inverness, however, thinks the terminal part is "ais," "which seems to be first for an older 'asti," and this again equal to 'osti,' the same as the Celtic 'vostis,' a town or 'baile'." An old form was Dolles Brough Tigh, the Fortified Dwelling of Sir William de Dolles. This gentleman was the proprietor of a considerable estate here in 1286, but all trace of his surly Strength has long since disappeared, and the very site on which it stood is now quite uncertain. The ruins of an old fortification near the present village of Dallas must have been a later erection. There is still documentary evidence to show that all the local families of Dallas have been derived from this stock. The modern spelling of the word has only been recently adopted in deference to the way in which the lineal descendents of Sir William came, in later times, to pronounce the name. The peasantry, however, still adhere, at least colloquially, to the older and more correct form of "Dolles," when applied to the parish.

DALNAHEGLISH—Dail na heaglais, The Haugh of the Church. There is an almost forgotten tradition that many years before the Reformation in Scotland, this picturesque ravine was frequently resorted to as a convenient trysting place for two very affectionate sisters then resident in this district. The elder was married to the proprietor of Carnoch in the Streens, while the younger had her home in the lands of Glenairnie. From the wild condition of the country at the time, these two places were considered as widely apart, and any intercommunication, even on horseback, was far from easy. As a way of shortening the distance, both ladies arranged to see each other at stated periods in the house of a well-to-do crofter who lived in this romantic spot. By and by, as each was of a devout turn of mind, they concluded that their happiness would be still further enhanced if they were to begin their social intercourse with a short religious service in conformity with the tenets of their own common Faith. Naturally

the neighbours were asked to join them, and as time went on the Meetings became highly popular, and the little community began to long for the return of their respected friends. This was regularly continued while the ladies lived. Years afterwards when a church was proposed to be erected, the Lethen and Ferness sections of the parish each strongly contended that the building should be on their own side of the Findhorn. At length, however, a compromise was happily effected, and it was mutually agreed to commemorate the ladies' pioneer work, and place the new structure on this semi-sacred spot. So runs the old story.

DALNEAN—Dail nan eun, the Haugh of the Birds. This is a beautiful hollow on the left bank of the river, scooped out by the potency of water in ages long gone by into the shape of a huge amphitheatre. It is securely sheltered from the chilly influences of adverse winds, and clothed, as of yore, with tangled thickets of wild rose, willow, birch, and hazel. This favoured spot continues to the present day a veritable Birds' Paradise. No sooner do the first rays of the morning sun, from day to day, during the Summer months, appear above the eastern horizon, than the feathered choristers—blackbird and mavis, chaffinch and robin—which have been enjoying their midnight repose under the leafy shade, waken up and gradually burst forth into a full voiced symphony of living song, and maintain it throughout the day aided by a variety of minor performers, till the merry concert finally dies away, with pleasing cadence, in the dim twilight of advancing night.

DALTRA—Dail traith, the Early Haugh. In 1645 it appears as Daldarrah, the Oak Wood. To the present day this holding fully maintains the character of its former reputation. The whole of the arable ground is pleasantly situated in a well-sheltered depression on the left bank of the Findhorn. Here, in the first of Spring, grass appears soon after the snow melts, and oats are usually to be found in stook before that grain, on the surrounding fields, is nearly ripe. In the Chartulary of Moray,

this place is referred to as "The Hermitage Croft," indicating the official residence of a local recluse, or priest. But times are changed, and this curious phase of life has long since ceased to exist among us.

DALTLICH—Dall toll aich, the Haugh full of Holes and Pools. Near this farm there is a fine bold arch of eighty-two feet span thrown across the Findhorn. After finishing the mason work, says a local tradition, the contractor and his men carefully removed the centring, and went home to dinner, with the intention of giving the building a few touches here and there during the following afternoon. On returning, however, to the scene of operation, what was their astonishment to find that not a single vestige of their handiwork was to be seen? The whole structure had given way, and lay a shapeless mass at the bottom of the dark pool below! Every one admitted that it was a sad calamity, discreditable alike to the good name and practical ability of both the master and his men. There was no use, however, crying over spilt milk. The order was immediately given to clear out the old foundations and begin the work anew. Some time after the completion of the present bridge, a friend chancing to meet the contractor, said to him:—"John, you must have been a good deal out of pocket through that unfortunate affair of yours." "Well, not so very much as you would think, man," replied he, "after all, I just had enough to pay expenses, and a shilling or two to myself, forby." These were the days in which contractors were able to live.

DROCHAID AN T' SITHEIN—The Bridge of the Fairies. These shadowy Beings, it was said, had a particular favour, from time immemorial, for the underflowing stream, but after the construction of the public road through this district, they at once arranged for a new and gorgeous residence beneath the bridge. Here, then for many years, a gay community lived and revelled in festive amusement and social mirth. As they were endowed with very superior intellectual powers, the entrance to their beauti-

ful abode was so artfully constructed that in the day time it was totally invisible to the natural eye. One very dark night, we are told, a belated drover from a Cawdor market, happened to pass this way. On approaching the bridge, he was greatly astonished and frightened beyond measure, to observe rays of the most brilliant light beaming through the rocky foundations, at numerous rents and cracks which the sharpest eyes in the country had never before been able to detect. Unfortunately for science, he had not the courage to stay and make a minute examination, but fearing to turn his head, or even to draw his breath freely, he strode on, reaching his home, we are glad to say, in perfect safety by three o'clock on the following morning.

DRUMLOCHAN—Druim lochan, the Small Loch on the Sow-backed Ridge. Formerly there was a series of dark mossy lakelets in the vicinity.

DRUMMORE—Druim mor, the Large Sow-backed Ridge.

DULSIE—Tulla sìdh, the Fairy Knowe, or Dail a sìdh, the Haugh of the Fairies. The belief in Fairies has, in every age, formed a very charming characteristic among the rural peasantry. The Shian Hill at Dulsie, by the river-side, was unquestionably the recognised metropolis of the Ardclach fraternity. In the Highlands generally the race was always referred to as a wandering remnant of the less wicked of the fallen angels who were permitted to remain on earth. It is true the Prince of Darkness continued to exercise a theoretical dominion over them, but in spite of his power and policy, each one claimed to do that which was right in his own eyes. The fairies never lived alone, or in pairs, but always in bands, tribes, or social communities. They were a most ingenious set, and knew full well how to apply their superior abilities to useful purposes. Every individual combined all the necessary arts in his own person, and displayed great expertness in handling the shuttle and awl, needle and hammer, according to his peculiar requirements for the time being. Without exception, they were a very merry lot, being

passionately addicted to dancing and every kind of festive amusement. Their normal habitation was always a low grassy mound, or ancient tumulus, over the ashes of the mighty dead, often far away among the upland moors, but in all cases at some distance from the busy haunts of men. Occasionally a benighted wanderer found considerable difficulty in passing a Shian Hillock. The quiet balmy air, the dimly subdued light, together with the low pleasing strains of the most enchanting music ; all combined so to fascinate his ravished senses, and hinder his steps, that it was often the dawn of the following morning before he was able to resume his onward journey. From those who were privileged to get a peep through an illuminated aperture, we learn that inside, the roof was supported on jasper columns, and that every part was beautifully decorated in the most splendid and magnificent manner. There were no visible windows, lamps or candles, they said, but the light which emanated from sparkling diamonds and other precious stones, set in the clear transparent rock, cast a rich luxurious radiance into every nook and corner of the spacious apartments. Once a year, at least, the assembled inmates were believed to ride out from the common knoll, in splendid processions on Hallowe'en, to indulge their fancies in moonlight revelry, marking the spots where they danced by numerous circles of green, known in the district as Fairy Rings. In spite, however, of all their seeming happiness and gaiety there was one dark cloud that obscured the brightness of Fairydom. From time immemorial they were bound to pay a periodical tax to the King of the bottomless pit :—

> "O pleasant it is in Fairyland,
> And happy there to dwell,
> But aye at every seven years end
> We pay a teind to Hell."

DUNEARN—Dun earn, the Fortified Mound on the River Earn. There are about two acres of good soil on the summit, but all traces of the vitrification have long since disappeared. The late farmer (Clark) used to tell of the immense quantities of fused

material which he removed in bringing this part under cultivation. It is said, that, according to the military requirements of the period, these forts were as complete as any which we now possess. When threatened by a hostile invasion from a superior enemy, the inhabitants collected their goods, retired to the nearest hill fort, and often defied the utmost endeavours of their foes to dislodge them.

FEMULLACH—Feidh mullagh, the Bog on the Height.

FERNESS—Fearn innis, the Flat Alder-covered Pasture. The Statistical Account (1842) of Nairnshire says that these trees "formerly succeeded well along the banks of the river and larger burns in Ardclach, attained to a great size, but of late years they are decaying in this as in other parishes, though the cause of their ceasing to thrive is unknown." Innis, is cognate with the Latin, insula, an island, but innis does not always mean island—it is often applied to a flattish pasture, and has this signification here, as well as in many other parishes throughout the Highlands.

FINDHORN—Fionnd Ear and 'n, a contraction of Amhainn or Avon, the White East River. Fionnd is strictly applicable to the extensive light sandy accumulations at the mouth. The old name was Erne, still preserved in the ruined Castle of Erneside which once protected its banks as an early stronghold. This may be from Eireann, the genitive of Eire, which is a female name, and probably that of some ancient Queen. Formerly there were two ferry boats on the Findhorn within the parish—the one on the Grantown road where the Logie Bridge now crosses the river, and the other at the parish church, chiefly for the convenience of the Glenferness worshippers. From source to mouth, this is a wild and impetuous stream, and many lives have been lost among its treacherous fords and pools. In consequence, there is an old belief that the Findhorn claims a victim every year, but two the following should the previous year have missed its due. The Rev. Donald Mitchell states that during the thirty

years when he was minister of the parish, no fewer than thirty-three persons were drowned in the river between Dulsie and the old Logie Pool. "It is still a good salmon river, but less than a century ago these fish were caught so abundantly, that it became a common practice for servants, when entering on an engagement with any family resident on its banks, to stipulate that they should not be offered salmon at any of their meals beyond a stated number of days in the week."

FLEENAS—Fluich innis, the Wet Pasture, or Spring Field. Fliche, water, and Flichneach, oozy or sloppy.

FLEENASMORE—Fluich innis mor, the Big Wet Pasture.

FLEENAS NA GALL—That portion of the Wet Pasture which was occupied by the Lowlander, in contradistinction to the Gael or Highlander. An English family named Gairn lived here in the early part of the nineteenth century. Gall, a stranger or foreigner, was early applied to the Saxons, and afterwards to the Norwegian and Danish pirates—hence, Fingalls, the white strangers, and Dugalls, the black strangers.

FORNIGHTY—For, equal to Fan, a Prominence, and Eitidh, a Smooth Surface.

GLENAIRNEY—Gleann airneadh, the Glen abounding in Sloes or Black Thorn (Prunus spinosa.)

GLENFERNESS—Gleann fearna innis, the Valley of the Alder-covered Pasture. Surrounding the Mansion House there is a considerable extent of rich haugh land which, in its virgin state, must have produced a great many wild Alders.

HUERNACH—Locally translated as Hell's Loch. Perhaps it may be derived from œ, water, and the old Gaelic ifrinn, which becomes iutharn, meaning infernal. This is a small mossy tarn, without any apparent inlet or outlet. As its placid waters lie gleaming and glittering amid the dark brown heather, one can scarcely help being struck with its pure and gem-like beauty. Of old it was confidently asserted that no plumb-line had ever reached the bottom, and that a secret subterranean communication

existed between it and the sister loch, about a quarter of a mile distant. Many years ago, this was proved on the authority of a decent moss labourer. One evening, after finishing his day's work, he left his peat barrow in its waters in order to tighten its creaking wooden wheel, but, to his great astonishment, it appeared next morning floating in the middle of the neighbouring Loch of Belivat.

JACOB'S WELL—This name originated in a very commonplace way, and dates from the time when the masons were engaged in the erection of the first mansion house for the late Sir James Montgomery Cunninghame. The structure, though well advanced in the Castle Park, was never completed. One of the workmen, Jacob by name, and a great favourite with all his fellows, discovered the Spring, and made a point every day of going down at the dinner hour, to drink from its clear crystal fountain. The others soon learned to copy his example, and to this day Jacob's Well continues to yield a plenteous supply of the same pure, refreshing water, of which the Glen masons drank and slaked their thirst on the warm sunny days of auld lang syne.

KEPPERNACH—Ceapfernach, the Place covered with Alder Stumps. These trees were plentiful on both farms of this name, almost within living memory.

KNOCKANDHU—Cnoc an dhu, the Little Black Knoll.

KNOCKANEORN—Cnoc an eorn, the Barley Hillock. Here, the rising ground from which the name is derived, was a small patch of arable land near the present farm house, but now forming part of a sixteen acre field. In those days when drainage was but little understood, cultivation was chiefly confined to the gentler slopes. "The principal agricultural improvements," to quote from the Statistical Account (1842), "recently made in Ardclach, have been made by Mr Brodie of Lethen, on the Mains of Coulmony, and upon moorish ground, on the hill called the Shaw, at an elevation of nearly 800 feet above sea level. In these improvements, the Deanston system of thorough drainage has been

carried into effect with complete success." A still older writer says—"Many of the mountains have formerly been tilled; for, when the heath that covers them is pulled up, or burned, the ridges and furrows of the plough are visible."

KNOCK CATTLE—Cnoc achadail, the Sleepy Hill. This is a height from which the herdsmen obtained a wide view of the animals, on the lower reaches, under their charge. Here, taking advantage of the situation, they were often found sound asleep during the warm Summer days.

KNOCK NA FEADAC—The Knoll of the Whistle. Fead, a whistle, is cognate with the Latin Fides, a lute. This is a mound on which the shepherds stood and directed their dogs by whistling, to collect or arrange their sheep, on the flat below.

KNOCK NA SNEESHIN—Cnoc na t'(s)naoisean, the Hillock where wayfarers rested to take Snuff. The knoll, now under cultivation, at Belivat near the Red Burn, was the spot where, in by-gone days, the farmers and cottars, weary and footsore, on their homeward journeys from Nairn, used to rest. Here, in friendly intercourse, they exchanged hospitalities from their snuff mulls, rehearsed the local gossip, and even at times, discussed the social and political aspects of the great questions of the day. Not unfrequently too, they stimulated their mental powers, and revived their drooping energies by a "wee drap" from their private flasks before separating for their respective homes, which they sometimes, indeed, reached happier than when they left the town. Many years ago, a worthy couple who lived in the lower part of the parish, having an addition to the family circle, arranged that the little stranger should be baptized in the Parish Church, and, on the appointed day, in the presence of the congregation, the ceremony was duly performed at the close of the service. It was a very hot Sunday, and on the way home the baptismal party sat down to rest on the Sneeshin Hillock, where, they partook of a slight refreshment, thoughtfully provided by the goodwife herself. This consisted chiefly of bread and butter and

cheese, liberally seasoned with good "mountain dew." As the baby had fallen asleep from the soothing effects of progressive motion, it was carefully wrapped up and laid down on the crisp heather, beneath a shady broom bush. Gradually the animation of the party became more and more evident. But when the generous liquid failed they all agreed that it was time to proceed homewards. After passing Rehaurie, "Big Bell" suddenly discovered that they had either lost or forgotten the baby. At this the mother began to cry, and all was now flutter and alarm—each one blaming the other for the unseemly neglect. To their credit, they all returned to the Sneeshin Hillock, and there they found the baby, safe and sound, and none the worse for its strange experience on the lonely moor.

KNOCK NA VEENIE—Cnoc na feanaig, the Little Hill of the Hoody Crow. (Corvus cornix.) In former days this was rather a troublesome bird. Feeding as it did on carrion, but preferably on sickly lambs, kids and winged game, it usually selected some lonely elevation from which it was able, in safety, to make frequent raids to the surrounding districts. But the social condition of man and beast has greatly changed in modern times. Knock na Veenie has, therefore, long since been deserted by the Hoody Crow. Indeed, its struggle for existence, in this parish, is now keener than ever.

LAKEN PRAE LUI—The Birth Hollow of the Calves. This is a fine sheltered glenlet in the face of Alt Lui to which the ewes and Highland cattle very often went, as they still do, when about to give birth to their young.

LAKEN—Lagan, the Little Hollow.

LEONACH—Liàn Achadh, a Swampy Meadow-like Pasture.

LEVRATTICH—Sliabh or Slieu Brattoch, the Heathy Slope of the Flag. According to an old but constant tradition, this was not only the signal ground, but a convenient rallying place when it became known that Cateran bands had been seen lurking anywhere along the Findhorn. These rievers were in the habit of

making the most unexpected descents upon the parish, and sometimes swept the flocks and herds clean before them from the unguarded fields and pastures. Such forays required to be thwarted by every possible strategy. No sooner, therefore, had the church bell been rung and the flag displayed on "Leubrattoch Hill," than bodies of strong men might have been seen hurriedly converging from all sides to intercept the foe, or force them, if occasion demanded, to surrender their illgotten booty. An old friend tells me (1887) that he remembered, when a boy, to have seen the decayed trunk of a very large rowan tree near the site of the present farm house, where the legend asserted that a patriotic leader on one occasion, took up his position, with a local contingent and successfully repelled a powerful body of western freebooters—thus saving the rich farmers on the "Laigh" from a sudden and well-organised attack upon their goods and live stock.

Little Mill—Here the miller ground his oats for many years in a small old-fashioned structure in which he had little more than room to turn. It was named by comparison with the Black Mill (Mhuilinn Dhu) on the same stream. Not a vestige now (1899) remains to mark where it stood.

Lochantutach—The Lochlet of the Tooting Horn. The moorland tarn thus named, is little more than a good sized mossy pool, with a soft peaty accumulation, all over the bottom. Along the margin, on the west side, there occurs a pretty rank sedgy vegetation, which the Highland cattle, in olden times, loved to crop, as a pleasant variety to the dry herbage on which they generally browsed, over the surrounding moor. Occasionally one or more of the beasts, in attempting to bite the inner growth, found themselves helplessly stuck in the tenacious deposit. Such casualties more frequently happened in Spring, when the cattle were newly turned out to the pasture, from their Winter quarters, at the neighbouring townships, in a rather lean and weakly condition The common herdsman was, therefore, provided with a

loud sounding bugle horn, with which he instantly raised the alarm, whenever he observed that an animal was sinking, or had waded in, beyond its depth. With all speed, the crofters from Aitnoch and Kerrow, appeared on the spot, and by means of floats, ropes and other appliances, did all they could to rescue the poor struggling creature from impending death, by drowning in the loch.

LOCHDHU—The Black Loch.

LOCH OF BOATH—The old story runs that long, long ago the site of this lakelet was a valuable peat bog, from which the people in the district, for many years, derived their Winter fuel. Gradually, however, the hollow thus formed became filled with water and was chosen as a favourite abode of the Kelpie and Water Bull. About the middle (1750) of last century it is said that the Cawdor Factor decided, for estate reasons, to drain the loch, and agreed with a well known contractor to dig the trench. On the day appointed his whole squad duly turned up and immediately commenced operations. Scarcely had the first sod been cut, than to their great surprise the sky suddenly lowered, and immense masses of black cloud very sensibly obscured the sun-light even at noon day. In a few minutes more, a terrible thunder storm broke right overhead. Each succeeding peal which rent the heavens seemed louder than the preceding, and, for several hours the lightning flashed incessantly on every side—running along the picks and shovels with awful brilliancy. It was freely asserted that no one present had ever witnessed such an outburst of elemental strife. Accordingly the poor labourers became utterly disheartened; they struck work, and declared that for neither Lord nor Factor would they ever again put a spade to the work, and the loch remains to the present day.

LOGIE—Lag, a Hollow. Here, in the olden time, there lived a great poacher—Sandy MacTavish by name. For many years he pursued his illegal craze, but managed very cleverly to baffle every attempt on the part of his proprietor to bring him to

justice. One day, however, a keeper came upon him just as he was secretly removing a fine hare from a trap. At last the fox had been run down, and the fact was exultingly reported at head-quarters. In a few days the sheriff officer served him with the usual summons. Thinking over the case, he wisely concluded that his only hope lay in respecting the law, and appearing before a Justice of the Peace at Nairn. On the morning of the court-day Sandy called on a young wife near by and asked her to put him to bed for a few minutes in her baby's cradle. This she laughingly did, and he confidently set off to town, where, as required, he duly surrendered himself to the civil power. Fortunately for him the prosecution had only one witness, and on his Lordship asking him whether he pled guilty or not, he boldly denied the charge, and swore that he had never committed any such crime since the time he was rocked in the cradle! The Judge seemed greatly puzzled, but the plea was good, and accordingly he considered it his duty to assolzie the pannel and set him at liberty.

LOOPMORE—Lubmor, the Big Dubby Marsh.

LUBLEISTER—Lub, a Dub and Seilisdear, the Yellow Flag, (Iris pseudacorus)—hence the place was known in Gaelic as the Lily Marsh. In conversing one day at the fireside with the late tenant—a worthy old Highlander of some four score years—we suggested that the name of his croft might mean "The Bend of the Arrow Maker." "No, no," he at once replied, "it was named from the abundance of a curious water plant called Seilisdear with long sword-like leaves and grew in a wet bog out there beside the house. I do not remember ever to have seen it in flower and cannot tell you its English name, but when I drained and took in the land, many years ago, it disappeared and has not been seen in this locality since." At the time we quite agreed with the good man and still think that his derivation is perfectly correct.

LURG—Lurga, a Long Sow-backed Ridge. Lairig means hilly

slopes, and Larg or Lurg signifies the base of a hill extending into a plain.

LYNE—Loin, a Large Sunny Level.

LYNECHORK—Loin a coire, the Sunny Level of the Oats.

LYNEMORE—Loin mor, the Large Sunny Level. On this holding there is not only an extensive area of table land, but also a Linne, or pool, at the foot of each of the two waterfalls on the adjacent Leonach Burn.

MAINS OF COULMONY AND GLENFERNESS—The term now so common in Scotland for the Home Farm, is a corrupted form of the French word, "Demesne," which originally meant that part of the estate held and cultivated by the proprietor for his own immediate benefit when resident in the Mansion House. The custom dates in Scotland from the time of Malcolm Kanmore, when estates were usually divided into "Inlands" and "Outlands." The former, or demesne, lay quite convenient to the Castle. The fields were tilled and cropped "by bondsmen who are described in the chartularies as 'villani,' 'fugitivi,' 'nativi,' and 'cottarii,' as well as 'cumerlachs' from their wailings and distress consequent on the conditions of their hard service."

MAOL AN TAILLEAR—The Bald Hill of the Tailor. So named, it is said, from the solitary croft of a local tradesman, who went about from house to house in the prosecution of his humble, but useful calling.

MEATON—Probably a Meadow-like stretch of pasture.

MILTON—The Anglicised form of Baile a mhuillinn, the Mill Homestead.

MONADHLIADH—The Grey Mountain Chain. In Ardclach, there is little more than the northern termination, but like the extended range, it too, consists of numerous deep glens, with correspondingly lofty pale summits.

NEW INN—The same as Balinriach. The adjective was used to distinguish the place from the other public houses previously established in the county. For many years there has been no

licence here, and the New Inn now exists as a body without the spirit. That the loss was a great gain, is fully evidenced by the increased moral and social welfare of every one within the surrounding district.

ORD (THE)—A Hammer of any kind. As the Hill seems roughly to represent an oblong mallet with the thin end jutting out towards the west, it may have been so named by the roving Norsemen in their wild incursions along the Moray seaboard.

PATGREENIE—Pat Grainaich, the Sunny Spot.

PATMUSSACH—The Worthless Hillock. This is still a sour neglected spot, producing a coarse tasteless vegetation which even the Highland cattle don't much care to eat.

PATNAMAIN—Pat na moin, the Place of the Peat Pots. As the neighbouring moss still continues to supply the Glenferness tenants with the staple portion of their fuel, the former characteristic remains, in many parts even to the present day.

POOL NA BODDACH—Poll na Bhodaich, the Ghost's Pool. This pool, drumly, dark and deep, lies under the dull shade of an impending rock which rises on the right bank, just where the Leven bridge now spans the stream. Situated as it is in close proximity to the burying ground, and itself the scene of many a drowning catastrophe, what wonder if the belated traveller at such a spot felt the air cold and clammy, and, in the awe-struck silence, became quite "creepy" at the bare possibility of seeing the White Lady gliding fitfully among the grave stones, or hearing the Water Kelpie screeching and splashing amid the dingy element as he approached the cheerless ford from either side! Nor was the simple peasant from the upland wilds alone in his eerie faith, for with the poet:—

> "All nations have believed that from the dead,
> A visitant at intervals appears.
> 'Gainst such belief, there's something stronger still
> In its behalf, let those deny who will."

There is also an old tradition that soon after the Reformation in Scotland, all the Roman Catholic images (boddachs) within the

parish chapel were passionately seized by the local Protestant enthusiasts and thrown into this pool. The sacrilegious act was long remembered with fear and trembling, and it materially helped to emphasise the name.

Pool na Callich—Poll na Caillich, the Pool of the Nun or Sister of Mercy connected with the place of worship which formerly stood on the site of the present Established Church. A later name was the Bell Pool.

Pool na Garrow—Poll na Garbh, the Rough Pool.

Prippets—A corrupted form of Preobaid, a word often applied to anything Trifling or Diminutive, and was the only name by which the small croft of Moss-side was formerly known.

Rearple—Reuth Earball, the Tail of the Common Pasture.

Rebanchor—Reuth Bein a Chārr, the Hill Pasture near the Mossy Plain at Banchor.

Refouble—Reuth Pobul, the Free Pasture Run. The present farm is only a very restricted portion of a large stretch of hill common on which, for many years, the neighbouring taxmen indiscriminately grazed their sheep and Highland cattle. About the end of the eighteenth century, however, the tenants were all limited to an equitable number of animals in proportion to the annual rent paid for their respective holdings.

Rehaurie—Reuth Samhair, the Summer Pasture.

Relaing—Reuth Leathan, the Broad Pasture.

Remore—Reuth mor, the Big Pasture.

Reroppie—Reuth roibhe, the Wet Pasture. Formerly this was a rather spongy moor, believed by the shepherds to generate among their flocks that much-dreaded disease known to them as the "Rot." On ill-drained pastures, during wet seasons, Fluke Worms (Distomæ hepaticæ) are bred in large numbers and do sometimes cause great mortality when conveyed to the ruminant stomach with the wet herbage to which the larvæ are attached in their early stage. By a wonderful instinct, they soon find their way to the liver and gall-bladder through the intervening tissues.

Here, by sucking the bile, they gradually drain the life energies of an innocent host, and thereby, in due course, attain their own full development.

RUMACHROY—Romach ruadh, the Red Marsh. Originally the chalybeate waters, oozing up through the superincumbent soil, left a reddish coagulum from which the bog received its name. Many years ago, however, the place was carefully dried and converted into a fairly sized croft.

SCORE—Sgor, a Dingle in a Hill-side, with Sharp Rocks, or a Waste Stony Part inside a Field. In 1654 the spelling was Skorghy. Locally the name was applied to a common gusset of rough scraggy land which lay between the neighbouring farms of Logie and the Lyne. Within recent years it was brought under cultivation and erected into a separate holding, which still retains the early name.

SGEODAG—A Corner Patch. Formerly this was a poor croft in the vicinity of Aitnoch.

SHENVAL—Seann Baile, the Old Township. This was a small collection of rude huts which may have been the oldest homesteads in the parish.

SLAGACHORRIE—The Hollow of the Glenlet. The term was anciently applied to a semicircular recess occurring among the hills, though such a depression only varied in shape according to the local geological formation, but in all cases it was originally due to the disintegrating influence of some mountain torrent. Occasionally it means a whirlpool in the sea. Some maintain that the name is Slochd a Corrie, the Ravine of the Kettle, and the following tradition is told in support of this view:—On that tragic night in 1442, when the Comyn Family were unsuspectingly put to the dagger at their own table, in Raite Castle, by the Mackintoshes, whom their hosts had intended as the real victims, one of the domestics—a covetous young fellow—is said to have done a crafty deed. Coolly taking advantage of the terrible death struggle which raged in the great

hall, he very stealthily entered the strong room and emptied the contents of the various coffers into an old kettle for his own personal use. Soon after midnight he slipped away from the Castle, under the cover of darkness, and sped with his heavy burden across the Hill of the Ord. On reaching this lonely hollow, he hastily dug a suitable pit, in a secret cranny, and therein carefully deposited his ill-gotten gear—hoping to remove it at the earliest possible opportunity. But the Fates had decreed it otherwise; the lad never returned, and the kettle with all its precious treasure still remains undiscovered, even to the present day.

STRANEORN—Sron eorn, the Barley Nose. In the Streens this was a narrow stretch of "haugh" land, along the river side, which yielded good crops of barley. It always sold for a high price to the local smugglers, and was generally depended on by the farmer for the payment of his rent and other necessary expenses. Such areas were usually styled the "Champion Fields" because they were able to produce this valuable grain for two or more years in succession. This was the home of the famous Callum Beg.

TACHTER—The full name is Loch an Taister-e, the Devil's Loch—though it is long since dried and the site under cultivation. In by-gone days, the good people along the Meikle Burn were very generally addicted to smuggling; and it was in connexion with the various rough "Ploys" got up by the "Bothie" loungers during the long Winter nights that this moorland tarn obtained its infamous name. About a century ago, there lived near by a well known character familiarly called "Shaggy Jamie," as he never shaved his beard or "cropped" his hair. On various occasions he had expressed among the farm servants, a strong desire to get the "Horseman Word," and be initiated into all the wonderful mysteries of that occult brotherhood. The wish was duly discussed in the "smiddy" for several evenings, and at last it was agreed to gratify him in this respect. To his great delight, arrangements,

they said, would be made for the grand celebration, beside the Loch an Taister-e, at the following Christmas. As it happened, the night turned out clear and frosty, and when the party arrived they found that the axle of an old fashioned cart had been sunk perpendicularly into the ground with a single wheel set on the projecting pivot so as to revolve freely in a horizontal position. On the nave of this primitive device, Jamie was seriously directed, by the master of the ceremonies, to take his seat. Thereupon two "friends," chanting some outlandish gibberish, took their places on either side and gradually worked up the heartless contrivance to a high degree of circular motion. As it was impossible for him to put forward any efforts in self-defence, one of the party kept a constant stream of cold water trickling over his whole person until they thought he had enough of it. Cold and senseless, poor Jamie was then helped down from his mazy seat and forced to take a smart race round the loch in order to restore his disordered circulation to its normal condition. This done, the "brethren" separated, never to meet again for a similar purpose in the parish of Ardclach.

TOM AN UAN—The Knoll of the Lamb, id est, Lamb Hill.

TOM CLACK—The Gossip's Hillock. Here, after the day's work was over, the neighbouring peasants often forgathered in friendly "celeidh," and many stories, both weird and pathetic of local romance, love and adventure were eloquently told around the fire. But when the narrators, themselves imbued with the superstitious, thrilled their hearers with many gruesome tales of ghosts, witches and fairies, it sometimes became an ordeal, from which even the stoutest hearts recoiled, to face the homeward journey alone, about the dead hour of midnight.

TOMLACHLAN—The Knoll of Lachlan, now long since forgotten.

TOMLEAGH—Tom liath, the Grey Knoll. This was a barren spot, and was named from an abundance of the silver lichen known as the Rein-deer Moss—(Cladonia rangiferina).

TOMLOAN—Tom lon, the Knoll beside the Spongy haugh originally formed on both sides of the Black Burn.

TOMNAGEE—Tom na guidh, the Hill of the Wind. The name was conferred at the suggestion of the late Mr James Brodie, of Lethen. It was formerly known as Greenloch.

TOM NAM MEAN—The Hill of the Kids. In the Spring time the nanny goats usually search for a secluded spot in a remote part of their pasture wherein to conceal and suckle their young.

TOMNARROCH—Tom nathrach, the Serpent Knoll. Without doubt, the reptile here referred to is the Slow Worm (Anguis fragilis). It is in no sense an adder, but a true lizard, and occurs pretty generally all over Nairnshire. Although shy, timorous, and quite destitute of poison fangs, and as powerless to inflict an injury as an ordinary worm, yet, curiously enough, it is more dreaded in some parts of the country than even the viper (Vipera berus) itself. It particularly enjoys basking on a dry sunny exposure, and not being very active on a bare surface it was pretty frequently seen among the upland wilds. This gravelly "tom" was, therefore, a most congenial habitat, where the early shepherds and herdsmen, noticing only its serpentine movements as it wriggled about in search of some suitable retreat, conferred the name—Tomnarroch—without troubling themselves to examine very minutely as to whether the creature was a lizard or a veritable ophidian. We have also heard the following story in connection with this place. Long, long ago, a rather miserly peasant, after erecting a rude homestead here, reclaimed a few acres from the surrounding moor, and settled down as a small crofter. Like many of his neighbours he had often some difficulty in getting ends to meet. But one night a bright idea came into his head. He resolved to store up a crop or two of his hay, in one big stack, and wait for a year of scarcity, when he hoped to command the market and obtain what to him would prove a little fortune. By and bye this crop failed, the price rose, and the coveted riches seemed almost within his grasp. With a light

heart he proceeded to the cornyard ; but no sooner had he removed the thatch than, to his great astonishment, he found that the stack was one wriggling mass of loathsome serpents ! The whole colony, not relishing such a rude intrusion into their comfortable abode, became excited and began to dart out in all directions, compelling the poor man and his wife to consider their personal safety and flee for dear life. The situation was now believed to be serious in the extreme ; for he not only lost his hay but had to employ men for several days to search for, and destroy all the vile reptiles about his premises, before he could settle down in easy confidence to again discharge the usual duties of his little holding. In front of the dwelling house there stands a large umbrageous Scotch fir, Pinus sylvestris, the solitary remnant, in this district, of the old Lochindorbh Forest.

TOMASHOGGLE—Tom a siagal, the Knoll of the Rye. Less than a century ago it was popularly believed in the parish that this hillock was the home of a small colony of Fairy Folk who lived in gorgeous apartments right under the grassy dome. By and bye a young married couple rather boldly selected this spot as their future abode. A rude hut was duly erected on the levelled surface, and a few acres brought under cultivation in the vicinity, but owing to the gravelly nature of the soil, rye was the only cereal that could be successfully raised—hence the name. Some years after the crofter and his wife had got settled down, we are told that a trig little fairy appeared in the gloaming to John, as he was cutting sticks for the evening fire. With a delightful smile she introduced herself and begged him to loan her a peck of meal to feed her family in an unexpected emergency. This he cheerfully did from their scanty store, and when the borrower returned a few nights after to pay back her debt, she assured the good man that the meal she had brought him was a special kind known only to the fairies themselves. "It is prepared," she said, "from the finest top grains which we gathered from the strongest stalks, on the richest oat fields, and mysteriously ground at mid-

night in the Little Mill by one of the cleverest workmen in all fairydom. It will not only fill your girnel, no matter what size," she added, "but continue undiminished as long as you live, on the sole condition that you and your wife keep the whole transaction a profound secret." As the terms were easy, the poor man promised implicit obedience. Thereupon the fairy, well pleased, bade him farewell, and instantly vanished into the surrounding darkness. All went well till the end of the following harvest, when a few lads dropped in "To crack their nuts and pu' their stocks, and haud their Hallowe'en." In the midst of the fun the goodwife remembered that she would need to bake a bannock or two for the company's supper. Taking out the necessary quantity of meal, she somewhat fretfully muttered—"Botheration to this fairy meal, I think it will never go done!" John looked at her very sternly and said—"Be quiet, woman, and don't blow away with your mouth what you did not gather with your hands." But it was enough, the spell was broken, and the next morning when Janet went to make her husband's porridge she found that the girnel was quite empty!

TORR—Tor garbh in full, the Rough Hill. This word is found in all the languages of the East and West. It has various meanings—tower, castle, mound, hill, rock, and even grave, from the cairns over the places of sepulture.

WADE'S ROAD—Traces of this old military highway are still to be seen along the route originally followed within the parish. In many places the disused track has been repaired and incorporated with the modern county roads in the district. In 1724, General Wade was commissioned by the Government to report on the disordered state of the Highlands. About four years later, he projected his famous scheme which did so much at a later period to open a section of the country which had been to that time almost inaccessible. Except where he met any insurmountable difficulty, he made his roads run in a straight line both up hill and down dale. Mr Burt, a writer in the reign of

George II., says :—"The roads on these moors are now as smooth as Constitution Hill. I have galloped on some of them for miles together in great tranquility, heightened by reflection on my former fatigue, when, for a great part of the way, I had been obliged to quit my horse—it being too dangerous to ride and even hazardous to pass on foot." Shaw, in his "History of the Province of Moray," appears to have thought them almost perfect. "They are formed," he writes, "from twenty to twenty-four feet broad, are annually repaired, have side drains, and great stones set up on the margins to enable travellers to mount on horseback, and act as guides in snow and mist. In a word, by means of these roads, soldiers have a straight and easy route ; artillery is carried into all the forts, waggons and all kinds of wheeled carriages can pass from south to north, the weekly posts make quick despatch—commerce and intercourse are made easy—convenient lodging is found at every stage, and the Highlands will be gradually civilized and improved. At Doulasie, in the parish of Ardclach a bridge of two arches was built across the Findhorn in the year 1754." The excellence of these roads has been summed up in the following couplet :—

"If you had seen these roads before they were made,
You would haud up your hands and bless General Wade."

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARISH.

From the elevated and exposed position of Ardclach, the climate is comparatively cold, and the Winters are sometimes rather severe and long continued, but the air is pure and bracing, while the health of the inhabitants shows a remarkable immunity from all the more dangerous forms of epidemic diseases. The annual rainfall does not usually exceed twenty-six inches, and the subsoil is porous, a condition which allows the superabundant moisture to be quickly absorbed. Considering the many undulations which occur over the surface, there are fewer hollows which retain water enough to constitute what is ordinarily called a lake, than might be expected. The two largest are the Lochs of Belivat and Boath. The former covers an area of about twenty-six acres, but has no visible feeder or known outlet.

As the rock formations on which the superincumbent soil, along with the accompanying gravelly deposits immediately rest, chiefly belong to the stratified crystalline series with the associated granitic masses, there is very little variety in the lithological character of the district. At several points along the Findhorn, but especially at Coulmony, Ferness and Dulsie, the stream has cut for itself deep narrow gorges through the opposing barriers,

and exposed some splendid sections of the underlying rock. Occasionally we meet with a granitic out-crop, the arrangement of whose quartzose crystals is strikingly beautiful amid the darker coloured grains of mica and hornblend. This stone forms a most durable building material, and when polished is equal in appearance to the finest specimens of the Aberdeen or Peterhead varieties.

Detached in varying sizes from the surrounding heights, there are not a few erratic boulders of the primary formation, sparsely strewn over the surface of the country. A relative set of travelled blocks, consisting of loosely compacted liver-coloured conglomerate, is met with in the middle area of the parish as well as all along the Lowlands of Nairn and Moray. A good example of this class may be seen resting rather uncomfortably on the margin of an open gravel pit on the east side of the Meikle Burn road about three quarters of a mile above Achavrate. In addition to the usual large pebbles found embedded in this rock, we notice that the pink quartzite characteristic is present in great quantities and that bits of pure white quartz are also numerous. The latest approved geological opinion is that these stray masses are the product of an immense glacial ocean—the only possible solution yet suggested. In this way only, could they have been carried during the Ice Age, down from the Strath Errick heights on Loch Ness, near the head waters of the River Nairn, more than thirty miles distant and deposited on the lower reaches towards the Moray Firth, as the frozen sheets gradually melted in the course of their onward flow, in a north-easterly direction.

In its passage along the parish boundary near Lethen House, the Meikle Burn has scooped out for itself a pretty deep ravine through the lowest division of the Old Red Sandstone down to the basal conglomerate which underlies the well known fossiliferous deposit, exposing large numbers of curious schistose nodules which contain many imperfect remains of both the animal and vegetable life peculiar to the series. These are succeeded at the

Clune and Braeval by the famous fish bed from which Louis Agassiz, the Swiss naturalist, obtained some of his finest specimens to illustrate his valuable work on the extinct races of the Old Red Sandstone. The fish remains are found imbedded in the heart of those small elliptically-shaped bodies of limestone which form the chief characteristic feature of this geological zone. The nodules themselves are composed of pure lime, and were largely burned at one time for mortar, as well as a powerful agent in fertilising newly reclaimed land. In many cases the specimens exposed by the hammer, are in a wonderful state of preservation, exhibiting as they do every fin and scale in their proper places, just as they were developed in the living individual long ages ago. The following species, among others, have been found here :—Pterichthys Milleri, P. cornutus, P. oblongus, P. productus, Coccosteus oblongus, Diplacanthus striatulus, Cheirolepis Cummingiæ and Osterlepis major.

On the left bank of the Findhorn, near the old Ardclach Schoolhouse and onward to Belivat and Remore, there occurs a beautiful series of low sandy accumulations known by the name of Kaimes or Eskers. It is now generally admitted that they originated during the ice meltings which brought the period of intense glaciation in Great Britain to a close. Long after the frozen summits of the Monadhliadhs, under the influence of the returning warmth, had begun to thaw, the valley of the Findhorn continued to be choked up to the level of the surrounding land by an enormous glacier, whose sea-ward progress was almost completely arrested by the immovable mass of Cairnbar. Over this surface there descended a broad current of water loaded with shingle and fine sand, disintegrated from the upper reaches. At the bottoms of all the great straits and fissures in the ice sheet, sand bars were formed in the calm water, but without any of the large boulders, as during the earlier stages there was no floating ice. After a time when the cold had disappeared, the land became submerged to a considerable extent, with a falling temperature;

these ridges and gravelly deposits were rearranged and beautifully moulded by the agency of conflicting currents passing over the bed of the ocean. Finally, when the land had regained its former height and the cold returned, the new glaciers which were formed among the mountains, began to creep down as before, towards the sea, dropping their load of embedded boulders now and again over the surface as well as upon the early formed sand hills, as the ice-raft gradually melted away under a climatic condition which approached very much to that now experienced in modern times.

The social state of the people has greatly improved within the last century. Previously, the peasantry and even well-to-do farmers knew nothing of the comforts enjoyed by their descendants in the present day. They lived contentedly in little low-browed, black huts, built of turf and rough hill stones in alternate layers. The roof was always covered with divots, straw or heather, while the interior was usually divided into two apartments termed a "but" and a "ben." For the construction of these, the surrounding pastures were often greatly impoverished by cutting and carrying away much of the best soil. The old Scotch laird, therefore, did not speak without some truth when he asserted, that "The flaughter spade would do more ill in Scotland than the Union with England." The roof was supported on long couples of undressed trees, joined at the ridge and resting, some ten or twelve feet apart, on a clay floor, but sunk for a short distance into the wall near the foundation. The fire was placed on a large hearth stone in the centre. Smoke rose in clouds, usually penetrating into all parts, and tainted the clothes and persons of the inmates with its peaty odour, before it found egress by a hole above, or not unfrequently through the open door or tiny apertures in the walls, intended for windows. Everything was black or tawny brown. Being accustomed by long experience to breathe such a loaded atmosphere, the family did not appear to feel the least discomfort or inconvenience

therefrom. On the contrary, they affirmed that it added greatly to the warmth and general cosiness of the dwelling. The inferior bipeds and quadrupeds had the freest access to the "fire end." Accordingly hens and ducks went in and out at their pleasure, while the pig marched about with great familiarity among pots and pans in search of any forgotten dainties. Occasionally when the weather was exceptionally cold, it might be seen stretched before the fire, enjoying a pleasant sleep on the warm hearth. The principal bed, in which the good man and his spouse reposed, was a large square box called a "close bed" from its being everywhere shut in. It was usually fitted with a pair of sliding doors, which was generally drawn to, when the parties retired to rest. In those days, it seems never to have occurred to any one, that pure air was in the least necessary as a preservative of good health. Sometimes the domestics occupied the "fire end" only, and gave up the other apartment for the accommodation of their cattle, while the poultry roosted anywhere overhead as much for their protection against the ravages of the fox, as that the cock should crow the household from their beds in the morning. At long intervals the refuse and dung in both ends were cleared out by two strong men, when the house was considered about as good as new. A strip of ground at the back formed the kail-yard. Greens and red cabbage occupied a large space, while, as a valuable domestic medicine, chamomile and hoarhound were sure to be found in a spare corner. A row of bourtree or willow was generally planted along one or more sides to ward off any malign influence, as well as being an effective shelter and protection to the homestead. In front stood the reserve midden, only a couple of yards or so from the door. During Winter it was heaped up with dung and decaying solids, while throughout the Summer the ugly hollow smelt strongly of its former contents. Here the hens and pigs held the freest revelry, and sometimes unwary visitors after nightfall were known to stumble and fall.

A small breed of hardy Highland ponies, called "garrons," were

kept and worked along with the cow or ox in general cultivation. The former, which were never shod, carried the manure and other burdens in basket panniers or "skellachs" suspended one on each side across the back. Excepting the coulter and share, the ploughs were entirely made of wood, and so light that the farmer or his servant usually carried one on his shoulder to or from the field as circumstances might require. To draw it, however, was altogether a different matter. This required from six to eight black cattle yoked in a double line with a goadsman walking beside them to see that each one took its proper share in the draught. They were supposed to be specially fond of music, and for their encouragement the driver always whistled a simple melody peculiar to this kind of field labour. So accustomed did the animals become to its pleasing influence that they stood when he stopped, and only started when he recommenced. Harrow tines were sometimes made of iron, but more commonly of the wood of the Holy Tree (Ilex aquifolium.) Black and white oats, Scotch bere, rye and potatoes formed the chief crops, which seldom yielded more than three returns. The harvests usually extended far into the Autumn, and in consequence the grain was often considerably damaged by the early frosts. The value of lime as a fertilising agent had begun to be spoken about, but the farmers were unable to afford the expense. Almost the only artificial light, other than the fire, during the long Winter evenings, was obtained from splits of moss-fir called "spiacks." On special occasions a tallow candle was kindled, but it did little more than serve to modify the darkness by producing a dim and shadowy appearance over the apartment. Spinning and weaving were important forms of domestic industry. The "plaiden," prepared in the parish, had the reputation of being the best in the county. As a pleasant entertainment after their daily toil, the long evenings were often spent by the lads and lasses in visiting at the neighbouring cottages. Here they sat round the fire and amused each other by singing ballads, chatting over any local

gossip, or listening to some new versions of those weird tales of superstition which exercised such a depressing and cramping influence on the minds of our forefathers. Witchcraft, in all its worst forms, was a universal belief. Every precaution was taken by the peasantry to protect themselves and chattels against such a subtle and dangerous agency. A sorceress of more or less repute resided in every parish, while a district sometimes even supported a professional witchfinder whose special duty was to search the locality, and bring all such escapes from Christianity to merited justice.

Private distillation became illegal by Act of Parliament in 1820, but for three centuries—fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth—whisky was the favourite drink of the labouring classes. It was esteemed a panacea for every ill, and the following rhyme was often sung in its praise:—

"A cogie o' yill and a pickle oatmeal,
An' a dainty wee drappie o' whisky,
Was our forefather's dose
For to swill down their brose,
An' keep them aye cheery and frisky."

At a later period smuggling, which was accompanied with many evils, was commonly practised among the crofters all over the country. About the beginning of the last century an attempt was made to put it down, and curiously enough when this business was restricted within the parish to only "five licensed distilleries and one public house at Dulsie Bridge," the morals of the people, it was said, became greatly improved!

The Gaelic language appears to have declined in Ardclach at a much earlier period than in the adjoining parishes. Seventy years ago, English and Gaelic were generally spoken by the natives, but to-day we are not sure if there be half-a-dozen who can converse in the latter fairly well, and the number is still fewer who make even the least pretence to read and write the ancient tongue.

The Highland dress of home-made tartan, which was formerly worn along with the distinctive dirk, sporran, and skian-dhu, has

long since been abandoned for machine-made fabrics and the modern Teutonic style of attire. The old people attributed the introduction of rheumatism to the substitution of cotton and linen instead of the woollen texture called "plaiden," formerly used for underclothing. They also affirmed that the production of erysipelas and other kindred diseases in the country was due to the poisonous principle contained in the potato which began to form part of the daily fare after the year 1750. Hill mutton, when in condition before Winter, and salmon from the Findhorn, were occasionally eaten, but the diet on which the poor chiefly depended was a vegetable one. Porridge and milk, in nearly every household, were prepared as the morning repast, while potatoes, sowans, and kale, served with barley cakes and milk, formed the usual meal at mid-day. A strong compound of pease, barley, and rye, ground together, and known as Rush, was often given to the servants, but so difficult was this mixture to digest that many required to take medicine twice a week, to enable them to continue its use! A kind of gruel, called "brochan," was often made by the goodwife during the forenight, and at supper time, this was poured out into a series of wooden bowls and handed round among the family as well as any neighbours who might have dropped in to enjoy a Highland "ceilidh."

Meat sold in Forres and Nairn at threepence and fourpence per pound. Fowls could be had for a penny each, while eggs brought twopence per dozen. The wages of men-servants ran from £5 to £6, and women got from thirty-six to forty shillings per half-year. Day labourers had to be content with sixpence to eightpence each.

In the year 1794, Mr James Donaldson, Factor for the Hon. William Ramsay Maule of Panmure, in his Report to the Board of Agriculture for Scotland says:—

"On the great majority of farms in Nairnshire, no stated or regular rotation of cropping was followed; and almost the whole county being unenclosed, the tenants were still accommodated

with natural pasture for their cattle on the moors near the base of the mountains. The implements were very imperfect, and, with few exceptions were fabricated by the tenants themselves. It is unnecessary to describe the clumsy awkwardness of the plough, in the construction of which comparatively little iron was employed. The carts had wheels about two feet in diameter; and the "skellach" sledge, a conical basket frame of twigs, was still commonly used. With regard to roads, the military road from Strathspey to Fort-George, was in excellent condition. The other roads were made and repaired under the authority of the Act 1669, but it is unnecessary to observe that they merit no commendation. The ploughs were chiefly drawn by oxen, which, when the crop was laid down, towards the end of June, were boarded for about three months at the rate of 1s 3d to 1s 6d a week each in the glens of the Highlands. The breed remained unmixed, crossed neither with the Lancashire nor Dutch, and they exhibited, when in flesh, a more handsome figure than the herds in the county of Moray. The horses which were reared by the most attentive farmers, sold at £7 to £10 sterling. Sheep were, almost without exception, of the small white-faced kind, which appeared to be the original breed of the county." The real rental of the County of Nairn was then £8000, but in 1897 it was £36,632.

Up till about the middle of the nineteenth century the County standard measure was too large. The Rev. Mr Macbean, minister of Ardclach, having directed attention to this matter in connection with an application for additional stipend in the year 1816, Professor Leslie of Edinburgh was employed by the Teind Court to test the local firlot and found it 4·2 per cent. larger than the Linlithgow or Standard Measure. In 1820, the subject was brought before the Nairnshire Farming Society by Mr Lewis Dunbar Brodie, of Burgie and Lethen, and after very careful investigation by their committee, they corroborated the finding of Professor Leslie. Many years, however, elapsed before the

various weights and measures were altered, and made absolutely correct according to the Imperial Standard. Thus, in matters of commerce, the giving a full and overflowing measure for so long a period could not be considered a bad characteristic of the Nairnshire people.

Owing to the geographical position of Ardclach the inhabitants were rather isolated from the local centres of civilization, and for this reason their manners and customs were considered somewhat less polished than those of their more privileged neighbours. In addition to the two annual holidays at Christmas and the New Year, the great popular rejoicings were held in connection with Baptisms, Marriages, and even Lykewaiks and Funerals. When a death occurred in the parish, the relatives and other friends gathered in the evening at the house of the deceased for the purpose of "taking about," and watching over the remains through the nights previous to the interment. This custom originated in early times, from the natural fear entertained by the inmates at having to pass the time alone with the corpse, as well as to prevent the possibility of its being molested, or even carried away, by fairies and evil spirits. For many years these meetings were conducted here as elsewhere, with much unseemly mirth and rough frolics which ill assorted with the solemn circumstances in which the thoughtless rioters had professedly met. But all this is now changed, for, during the two past generations at least, no such improper behaviour has been witnessed in the district.

As might have been expected, music contributed in no small degree to the enjoyment of almost every social gathering, and the instrument most in favour was the national bagpipe. In addition to the ordinary reels, marches and strathspeys, the pibroch—a wild and irregular melody—was greatly admired all over the Highlands. It is remarkable for the simplicity of its rhythmical modulations, combined with the jumbled flow of its notes throughout the quicker parts. The exciting pathos of its martial

sounds was reputed to stir up in the Celtic imagination a vivid rehearsal of the terrible conflict in all its parts—the steady advance, the clash of arms and the glorious victory, with the consequent pursuit of the enemy so indelibly associated in the mind of the Highlander with every scene of military strife.

Previous to the Reformation there is no mention of the parish as presently constituted, but there is occasional reference to two places of worship connected with the district. The one was at Lethen while the other stood on a spot, still known as the Chapel Park, near the modern Mansion House at Glenferness. The field is very hard and stony throughout, but on the south side of the included clump of trees there is a small patch of fine soil, through which, as the grieve states, "the plough goes as if it were in a meal girnel." Almost without doubt, this was formerly the Priest's garden from which the surface stones had been gradually removed by the successive incumbents. Both sanctuaries belonged to the same diocese and were supplied with religious services by the Dean of Auldearn.

A large boulder, called the Priest's Stone, bearing the figure of a basso-relievo cross, is said to have been covered over by the workmen, about seventy years ago, when repairing the present county road leading down the brae to the parish church. Such cross-marked stones were very common all over the country. In 1500 the parish is first mentioned as a vicarage, whereof the minister of Rafford was patron. He was succeeded by Brodie of Lethen. The church was erected about the year 1645, and for several years Ardclach and Edinkillie were united and served in turn by the same clergyman. This arrangement, proving unsatisfactory to the members and adherents, was appealed against, and the Government, in deference to the wishes of the people, issued a Decree of date 13th February, 1650, erecting the district as it now stands into a civil parish. The following was included from Auldearn :—"The lands of Lethenbar, Fornighty, Fleenas-na-gall, Achamore, and Achavelgin, belonging to Alexander Brodie of

Lethen, and Middle Fleenas and Achnatone, belonging to William Rose of Clava, and Hugh Rose, fiar thereof." The present manse was built in 1744. It was repaired and an addition put to it in 1816, and again repaired in 1841. The Disruption occurred in 1843 and the Free Church was erected in the year following. In 1817 the population of the parish was 1287. The following is a list of the Protestant ministers since the Reformation :—

Mr William Brown, Reader in 1570.

Mr William Simpson, Vicar in 1588.

Mr Robert Dunbar, Minister of Edinkillie and Ardclach in 1624 ; died in 1638.

Mr David Dunbar, ordained 8th June, 1637, to both parishes, and translated to Nairn in 1638.

Mr Donald M'Pherson, ordained 1638, and translated to Calder in 1642.

Mr George Balfour, ordained 1642 ; died 4th January, 1680.

Mr Patrick Grant, ordained 12th August, 1680 ; died September, 1715.

Mr John Duncanson, ordained 13th September, 1716, and translated to Petty in 1728.

Mr William Barron, admitted 24th April, 1729 ; died February, 1779.

Mr William Shaw, admitted 14th October, 1779, demitted 1st August, 1780.

Mr Donald Mitchell, admitted 3rd May, 1781 ; died 22nd June, 1811.

Mr Hugh Macbean, admitted 10th September, 1812 ; died 17th September, 1851.

Mr Colin Mackenzie, M.A., admitted as Colleague and Successor, February, 1850 ; died 7th July, 1882.

Mr David Miller, B.D., inducted 2nd February, 1883.

Mr Henry Macleod, ordained and inducted 16th April, 1844 ; died 19th February, 1876. (Free Church.)

Mr Alexander Macdonald, ordained and inducted 6th August, 1872. (Free Church.)

In Ardclach, as in most other parishes throughout the Highlands, there was a worthy band of "Men" who occupied a moral platform peculiarly distinct from that of the community in general. From the depth and firmness of their convictions, they were distinguished in their daily walk and conversation for sobriety, prudence, and genuine piety. For social and business customs they had no sympathy whenever these ceased to harmonise with the approved beliefs and laws of Christian honour.

Their seasons of prayer—secret and domestic—were frequent, beyond the rules of any prescribed routine, and though their own estimate of personal spiritual attainments was never high, yet in their lives, they conscientiously strove, as far as possible, "To adorn the doctrines of God their Saviour in all things." Their natural feelings regarding things human were kept so strictly under control that neither the successes nor calamities of ordinary life were seen to disturb, in any marked degree, the uniformity of an almost passionless serenity. As a rule they had only a very rudimentary knowledge of the branches of secular learning, but a few individuals were wonderfully intellectual and refined, while some among them were gifted even to the verge of genius.

Almost the only text books to be observed on their book-shelves in addition to a "big ha' Bible," were the Confession of Faith, and the Shorter Catechism, along with a few selected volumes from the writings of the Puritan Divines. These they privately studied with reverent care, and often read aloud from them one or more judiciously chosen portions on the Sabbath evenings to their assembled households. Their expositions of Scripture narratives were frequently solicited by admiring friends and eagerly listened to. Sometimes their modes of expressing Bible truths were so profound and terse that they were caught up and treasured among the people as household words. Usually, office-bearers in the Church, the "Men" were always welcome in the sick room, but especially so at the bedside of the dying. Endeavouring in every way to be living epistles of

Christ, their services were well calculated to cheer and sustain those who were weaker and less advanced in the experience of things spiritual. As ordinary members of society, they were liable to be misrepresented, and their enemies, indeed, sometimes said that they were straight-laced, narrow-minded, and even bigots, but they had to allow that the "Men" were at heart honest and sincere—desiring to serve God up to the full light of their conscience. Occasionally there may have been a hypocrite among them, but a counterfeit character was so difficult to maintain in such a virtuous environment that it was seldom successful for any length of time.

When the nights were long, the "Men" often spent the evenings in each others houses for mutual prayer and in friendly "celeidh." Remembering that they were only "pilgrims and strangers" here, the affairs of the present world with its trials and sorrows occupied a very subordinate place, while their hopes and joys respecting the future inheritance formed the chief topics of their social intercourse. If, however, secular subjects chanced to be inordinately introduced at any time, they were usually turned with sanctifying ingenuity into holy emblems and spiritual analogies.

According to the general custom of the time, the "Men," as well as large numbers of church members and adherents, made it a sacred duty to attend as many Communion services as possible, both in their own and surrounding parishes. On all such occasions they were everywhere cordially welcomed and hospitably entertained by private friends, who generously made special preparations for the purpose. Generally the "Men" tried to be present on each of the five days, but in any case they seldom failed to turn up at the Friday fellowship meeting, which was regarded as peculiarly their own. Indeed, it was here that they appeared to the best advantage, as their energies found free issue in their favourite field of experimental theology. Their chief object was to cherish mutual comfort and consolation to their

hearers, but especially as to any who might be concerned or even despondent with regard to their interest in the Kingdom of God.

Under the presidency of the local minister, who was often assisted by a brother from another congregation, the meeting was opened with praise and prayer in the usual way. Thereafter the Moderator announced that they were prepared to hear any one who might have a "question" to propose. In a few minutes the opportunity was embraced, and some one from among the "Men" rose and read a passage, over which he had probably been pondering for some days previously. He stated very briefly that he desired to know from it the marks which distinguished the real from the nominal follower of Christ. The Scripture text was then commented upon by the presiding minister so as to indicate the true scope and meaning thereof. The "Men" were then called upon successively "to speak to the question," and after each had expressed his views and experiences the minister again rose and summed up all that had been said—approving, modifying, or enlarging according as he might think necessary. Thereafter he made a practical application of the whole, and concluded by asking the one who proposed the "question" to engage in prayer. Then after praise, the benediction was pronounced and the meeting came to an end. Among the "Men" of Ardclach we remember John Mackillican, Achagour; John Rose, Lynechork; James Riach, Fornighty; George Macdonald, Achavrate; George Fraser, Tachter; Alexander Rose, Fleenasmore, and John Fraser, Little Mill. These have all joined the majority and the only one now alive (1900) who "companied" with these "Men" from a very early period is Mr Alexander Mackintosh, Balville. In many ways he is a most worthy representative of a class which we regret to say will soon be known only from the pages of history.

Whilst admiring the beautiful scenery along the banks of the Findhorn the stranger to this parish is apt to be struck with the situation and quaint appearance of the little old Belfry which has been erected on a low sandhill above the manse. Although the

inhabitants of the parish, even in the neighbourhood, know almost nothing regarding its real history, yet the peculiarity of its position is such that it is mentioned in most of the works of the great writers on Scottish ecclesiastical architecture. According to an old local tradition "it stands a mile above the church." Although this may not be absolutely correct from the latest measurements, yet we believe it may safely be described as the highest Belfry in Scotland.

Near the northern end of the adjoining ravine, by the edge of the river, two hundred feet below, and at a distance of seven hundred and sixty-four yards by the regular pathway, stands the Parish Church on the edge of the glebe, from which, the Presbytery records inform us, the great Moray Flood of 1829 carried away an acre. Hemmed in as it is on all sides by a series of continuous elevations, no sound from a bell erected on the building itself could possibly be heard save in the immediate vicinity. Hence the heritors of the period considering the peculiarities of the situation wisely fitted it on the summit of the little neighbouring Keep, where it could be heard tolling its peaceful chimes in the quiet of a fine Sabbath morning over a large area of the surrounding district. In the Presbytery records there is reference to two bells—a big and a little one. The former is said to have been a very superior article, but that it was torn down long, long ago, and thrown into the river by a band of Lochaber rievers and hopelessly lost.

Strange as it may appear, the Bell Tower does not stand on Church land at all. There is no authority, so far as we can learn, by which a Presbytery or heritors were ever empowered to erect such buildings, and even if they had, it is evident that they could only have done so on their own property. Accordingly it is supposed to have been originally used as an estate prison, and that the Laird of Lethen, who was the patron of Ardclach, and a staunch Covenanter, allowed the Kirk Session to use the building, from time to time, when it was not otherwise required, first as a place

of confinement for the moral delinquents in connexion with the congregation, and thereafter as a "bell house," on account of its proximity and situation.

Externally it is a compactly built fourteen feet cube, with two gables and covered by a slated roof—in fact, so far as it goes, it is just a reduced copy of the ancient donjon so frequently met with as the central stronghold of those early castles which were erected in this country after the date of the Norman Conquest. The summit of the southern gable has been coped with an open granite Belfry, while the other terminates in an ordinary chimney. Underneath the former, there is a carved stone bearing the figures 1655, and one is curious to find out the event to which they refer. Among the old people there was a pretty constant tradition that the Bell Tower was once burned to the ground. In support of this belief there is a statement in the "New Statistical Account" that, after the battle of Auldearn in 1645, the lands of Brodie of Lethen were over-run by the Marquis of Huntly, who "Did utterlie burn the hail lands whereupon there was above ye number of eight scoire persons, and left not ten of them to remaine." Again, in 1654 the Earl of Glencairn "burnt the corns and houses of Lethen." In these circumstances it is scarcely possible to believe that the "prison-house" would be allowed to escape in the general destruction. No doubt steps would be taken as early as possible to have it restored, and the date 1655 which is the year following, may, therefore, very probably refer only to that event.

Internally it consists of two apartments, one on the ground floor, with a low entrance only three and a-half feet high, and the other above. The upper chamber is reached by a short stone stair, leading directly from the outside door, only three feet nine inches in height, and is provided, for the comfort of the guardian officer, with a fireplace, three single paned lights, and a recess in the wall for a garderobe. In the event, however, of an attack being made upon the place for the purpose, as may

be supposed, of rescuing from confinement some misguided parochial transgressor, the means of defence afforded to the keeper were, a strong door, barred from within, a set of iron stanchions inside the windows, with three shot holes of simple construction piercing the walls on two sides. One of these is placed on either side of the fireplace already mentioned, and a third so as to protect the only entrance which overlooks a steep descent facing towards the east.

Above the chimney piece there is a nicely cut monogram of three letters, M.C.B., believed to be the initials of Margaret Clerk or Brodie, daughter of James Clerk of Balbirnie, in Fifeshire. This lady was the first wife of Alexander Brodie, first laird of Lethen.

The ground area is almost entirely occupied by a dreary vaulted den which has, no doubt, been used from time to time, both as a baronial and church Keep in which the prisoner might, indeed, move about freely enough in a bent position in utter darkness through a small space some ten feet long by seven feet wide, and about five and a half feet high at the centre of the arch. From its elevated situation the Bell Tower may also have been used as a place from which to watch the cattle rievers, who were wont to make incursions along the Findhorn valley, either to, or through, the parish. In the Spalding Club there is printed a copy of a bond of blackmails, dated Nairnshire, 1st November, 1657, by which certain local gentlemen contracted in given circumstances to protect their Lowland neighbours against the freebooting of their Western countrymen.

Except as an indication of the zeal of the heritors and minister of those days in the cause of religion, it is to be feared that the maintenance of this quaint little pile as "a terror to evil doers," did not do much to restrain the various forms of crime and immorality which were then so prevalent throughout the community. As a rule the local Kirk Sessions were chiefly occupied in dealing with cases of heresy and backsliding, rebuking and

excommunicating any noted offenders whose example they considered dangerous to the spiritual life of those resident within the bounds. There is no reason to believe that punishment by means of "the jougs" was ever exercised here, as in the neighbouring parish of Cawdor, since no trace of this kind of pillory has ever been discovered either at the Bell Tower or the door of the Church.

The following particulars are quoted from the records of the Presbytery—1st August, 1676, Margaret Taylor, having been found guilty, was by order of the Presbytery "sent to the prison-house at the church" of Ardclach. Again, thirty-one years later, on the 30th March, 1707, James Stewart, for some reason which is not very definitely stated, appeared before the Session, but "Refused either to tell the Session or to purge himself by oath till he would get the author in this scandall as he alledges. Therefore the Session has ordered two elders and the officer to put him in the steppell till he humble himself to the discipline of the church."

By the middle of the same century the flow of enthusiasm which prompted the heritors to devote the little "prison-house" to the service of the church appears to have considerably subsided. For, in 1760, the Rev. Mr Barron submitted a list of repairs necessary to be effected upon "the office-houses, bell-house, and pulpit," which, it was admitted, were in a ruinous condition, and elaborate steps were taken to have the expense estimated. During the course of the following six years negotiations, "as to what further was necessary for finishing the affair," were carried on from time to time between the Presbytery and Heritors with every prospect of ultimate success. The result, however, only strengthened the truth of the saying that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." For at the end of that long period the minister, from his seat in the Presbytery, reported on the 21st October, 1766, that "Nothing had been done to the lattern, school, bell-house, or grass." Yet the good man does not appear to have lost heart over the business, for there can be

little doubt that to his persistent efforts the parish is wholly indebted for the preservation of this ancient and curious structure —combining the character of Prison and Belfry, which so far as known at present, appears to be unique in the Scottish field of ecclesiastical architecture.

Let us now turn to a less authentic aspect of the story as it has been handed down through the medium of an old and interesting tradition. Long, long ago, when clocks and watches were little known, except by name, in the rural districts of Scotland, there was no small stir for weeks on end among the homely parishioners of Ardclach when the heritors and minister of the period decided to order a bell for the purpose of inviting their fellow-worshippers at a regular hour to the House of Prayer. The commission was entrusted to an eminent bell-founder in the city of Edinburgh, and every care was taken to inform him that they would only receive and pay for a first-class article. During the time that the artisans were busily engaged in the preparation of the various metals, a mysterious personage of commanding appearance and gentlemanly bearing, walked into the workshop, and, addressing the manager, inquired the nature of the business which so much engrossed his attention. In reply, he was respectfully informed that they were about to cast an exceptionally fine bell for the Parish Church of Ardclach. On hearing this the stranger became still more interested in all the arrangements, and having satisfied himself as to the genuine quality and due proportions of the compound, he waited on until he saw the whole reduced to a perfect state of fusion. Then quietly advancing to the mouth of the furnace, he drew from his pocket a handful or two of the sterling coins of the realm, and notwithstanding the doubt which modern science throws on the wisdom of his generosity, dropped them one by one—sovereign and shilling—into the midst of the glowing metal. After attentively watching the process of casting for a short time longer, he courteously took his leave of the mastersmith, but without giving him any

information which might afford the least possible clue either to his name or status in society. Walking smartly out into the street, he quickly disappeared among the passing crowd, leaving his identity a matter of doubt and speculation to the present day.

In due course the bell was finished, sent to Ardclach, and carefully hung in "the steppell." On trial it proved to be in the highest degree satisfactory to all concerned, and without an equal in any of the surrounding parishes. Not only could the rich jowing of the splendidly toned metal be heard with great clearness over the length and breadth of this extensive parish, but, we are assured that the gladsome chimes, emitted on a fine Sabbath morning were often distinctly heard in the good towns of Forres and Grantown, more than eleven miles away. No wonder that the parishioners were proud of their bell.

The inhabitants of this parish, however, lived in an age when

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who had the power,
> And they should keep who can,"

was in full force among the Celtic clans. The Lowland counties, but particularly those situated like Nairn along the border line, were at all times open to the uncertain consequences of a sudden foray from the Western Highlands. In connexion with these fierce inroads the Cateran bands were wont to descend, at irregular intervals, upon the rich pastures on the seaboard of the Moray Firth, sweep them of their flocks and herds and boldly drive them away to their own mountain fastnesses, or sell them with all possible speed at the most convenient markets. In these circumstances the people of Ardclach were in nowise exempted from the general order of things. In fact, as the valley of the Findhorn formed a pretty direct line of communication between "the bonny land of Moray," where it was said that "every 'gentleman' was at liberty to lift his prey," and the south-west, they required not only to be continually on their guard against any sudden incursion from one or other of the predatory clans, but at all times to hold themselves prepared to assume the

offensive for the purpose of protecting their own, or rescuing the plundered bestial of any of their neighbours which might be in course of transit through the parish. On all such exciting occasions—

> "The alarum was rung on the Bell Tower height,
> And the Warning was spread around,
> That a riever force of intrepid men
> Was treading upon parish ground."

To a cunning and rapacious foe whose movements were intended to be quick and decisive in the district, the result of this intimation was often unfortunate and disappointing in the extreme. In order, therefore, to place things on a better footing for the time to come, it was resolved, on the part of a few of the leaders, to attack and destroy the bell-house on the first favourable opportunity. Accordingly a small detachment of daring spirits was told off, and sent down to the parish with instructions to accomplish the deed at all hazards. Stealing along the bed of the Findhorn they climbed the left bank of the river, and, at the dead hour of one dark night, began the work of destruction. At no small trouble and inconvenience to themselves, they at length succeeded in displacing the fittings and to their great satisfaction the bell dropt to the ground. The building was at once given over to the flames and speedily reduced to a bare and blackened skeleton, enclosing nought but a crackling mass of smouldering ashes. Away then they hurled the bell, rolling and tumbling and bumping down the brae and over the rock, dolefully chiming out its own "coronach," until it reached the waters of the river, where, in the dark pool at the foot of the crag,

> "The bell sunk down with a gurgling sound,
> And the bubbles rose, and burst around."

Here it lay for many a year, and might, long ere now, have become entirely forgotten, were we not assured on the authority of an ancient Tradition that, when the river descends in angry flood, it may still be heard, by all those endowed with clairaudient perceptions, rumbling about among the submerged boulders, and breathing out as from time to time it chances to be driven

against the rocky masses, a few softly subdued and mystic tones —a feeble imitation of those once clear and sonorous notes, the like of which, the Legend as certainly affirms, may never again be heard pealing among the hills and valleys throughout the parish of Ardclach.

In the social economy of a period not so remote, the hand quern was the chief instrument by which the common people in this parish ground their corn, and prepared a very inferior kind of meal. From the rude way in which the grain was dried, the cakes were so dark that the name White Bread was a sufficient designation for some time after the introduction of wheaten bread to distinguish the "aran caneach" or foggy loaf from the rough bannocks generally used in the daily fare. As a matter of course, the early meal mill, driven by a mountain torrent, with all its curious movements—revolving and clanking from morn to even—became a source of never-ending wonder, and sometimes even dread, to the simple-minded spectators among the rural population. No wonder then, if the miller who alone understood and daily managed such a strange combination, was a personage of no small consequence in the estimation of his regular customers. By a few he was believed to be even somewhat "uncanny," as being of necessity more or less versed in the mysteries of the famous Black Art. So greatly did these rude machines come into favour that Ardclach, in course of time, came to possess a half dozen of them at least. Occasionally it happened that one or other of these attained to a higher degree of popularity and fame than the rest. This was chiefly to be attributed to the many wonderful stories which were circulated about them; and these, in a great measure, depended on the general shrewdness and force of character inherent in the miller himself. In addition to this, a romantic situation together with, perhaps, a comparatively greater complexity and strength of machinery, helped to account for not a few of the strange things which were reputed to have happened within the mill.

By the side of the Red Burn, at the bottom of a deep sequestered ravine, on a level grassy spot, among birches, hazel, and dark frowning pine trees, there stood, fully a century ago, one of these meal mills. In comparison with any of the present day, the building was a small unpretending hut, constructed of rough hill stones intermingled with turf, enclosing a very simple combination of mechanical power, and driven by means of the old fashioned water-wheel now entirely out of date. As might be supposed, its total capacity was not very great, but, notwithstanding, the Mill of Remore was after all a very famous one.

In those days the houses were few in the vicinity, and there were not many men—the miller excepted—who cared to pay a visit to it after sundown. This was because there were nights, when it was certain that not a single human being was inside, the mill might be heard grinding away as busily as at any time during the day. From the testimony of those who ventured in the midnight darkness to approach within easy distance, we learn that glimpses of numerous tiny lights were frequently to be seen passing and repassing behind the little hazy windows, as if all were life and activity in the interior. The nocturnal labourers, it was said, had their usual abode far ben among the hidden recesses of Cairnbar, where they lived and carried on, in a peculiar way, all the affairs of human life. Taking advantage, however, of the miller's absence, they often left their secret chambers and took possession of the building for their own purposes. When the mill stopped before one o'clock, they all returned laden with provision to the hill side, and re-entered by a mysterious opening which again closed behind them, leaving no trace of the roadway to ordinary human vision.

By and bye, one of these fairy creatures became more than usually bold. In order that everything might be in readiness for the midnight operations, it was in the habit of making its appearance occasionally some hours previous to the miller's departure. At these times it manifested great activity in supplying the fire

with fresh fuel while he was engaged tidying up his day's work in the other end of the mill. Its shape was that of a dwarfish man of some four score and ten, with dark wrinkled features, and bright piercing eyes, all aglow with rougish glee, but lithe and agile in every limb and movement as a lively youth just entering on his teens. Such intrusions became a source of considerable inconvenience and even some little terror to the goodman himself, and none the less so, when, after finishing its work it would sit down before the fire to wait the arrival of its boon companions. After pondering over this matter very carefully for some days he at last decided to open a small hole in a suitable place behind the "ingle," where with his long corn rake in hand he would be able, at the right moment, to act in secret with alacrity and effect. Here, one night he accordingly took up his position in the hope of being able to accord a warm reception to his old friend whenever it might choose to put in an appearance. Nor had he long to wait, for, in due course, he saw the fussy little pioneer, as on former occasions, gliding about among the uncertain shadows of the ever deepening twilight, and earnestly engaged at its usual occupation. Having at length heaped on fuel to the utmost capacity of the fireplace, it sat down on the warm hearth-stone and fixed its eyes intently on the ruddy flames as they danced and flickered above the kindling fire. Just when the burning mass had risen to the highest degree of glowing heat, the miller cautiously inserted the broad end of his rake, and, vigorously scattering the blazing embers in all directions, he so completely overwhelmed the eldritch creature that, quite bewildered and terribly burnt, it danced and screamed through fear and intense pain. The situation had become even now more than pleasantly critical for the poor man, but when the mill door fell wide open and the place began to fill up with a crowd of excited inquirers, all flitting about in the obscure light of the apartment, and manifesting the liveliest interest in the sad condition of their frantic companion, the miller very naturally gave himself up for

lost. Nor did he do so without good reason; for, although he was able to gather but little from the confused babble of a multitude of curious voices, yet he very clearly understood from many a significant look and gesture that they were all engaged in an earnest consultation as to the best means of inflicting an adequate revenge. At last the din ceased, and his hope revived. But when he saw himself the next moment surrounded by the fiendish host, each of whom was gnashing its teeth in wildest rage, the miller naturally closed his eyes under the full impression that he would never open them again in the present world. Just as they were advancing, however, in one horrible phalanx for the purpose of enclosing him in their united grasp, to their great consternation a cock crew among the rafters of the building overhead. Their spell was thereby instantly broken, and in a few minutes more the entire gang, wholly baffled and disenchanted, had totally vanished from the scene. For a time the air felt thick and oppressive, but a dull wind rose and continued to blow with "eerie sough," till the morning hours among the pines and birches on the other side of the burn. In a short time the miller had so far recovered his senses from a condition of fear and astonishment that he was able by the light of the rising moon to take a look round among the machinery and to his great satisfaction found that he was unable to discover the least trace of his late intruder or any of its gruesome companions, and from that day to the present we are happily assured that none of the shadowy race has ever again been seen either at the old mill of Remore, or in any other place in the parish of Ardclach.

In consequence of the physical irregularities which characterise the general surface of the country in most parts of the North and West Highlands of Scotland, we find, scattered in all directions, a series of goodly sized lochs. In addition to these there is a still greater number of smaller pools and dark mountain tarns which are to be found stretching along the bottom of our larger glens, or hidden far and away among the seclusions of the many ghowls

and corries which lie high up in the bosom of the distant hills. Among these, in bygone days, there was popularly supposed to be found a terrible water animal: half beast, half demon, which, in obedience to the vagaries of its own peculiar instinct, was capable of transforming itself into a variety of forms. Two of the favourite shapes in which it delighted to present itself to the benighted wanderer among the upland wilds, were those of either a horse or bull (An t' Each Uisge, 'san Tarbh Uisge) but on very rare occasions as that of an awful hybrid combining the character of a fearful serpent with that of a monstrous eel.

Although these water bulls were occasionally to be met with in the less secluded lochs of the lower districts, yet, we are informed that they often took up their abode in the secret recesses of some dark rock-bound linn, formed in connection with the tortuous windings of a goodly-sized mountain stream but most likely of all in one of the numerous tarns—mossy, calm, and unfathomable—which are situated far away among those Alpine solitudes which are remote from the usual dwellings of mankind.

At times during the hottest months of Summer a bewildered traveller in these regions might now and again encounter a stray individual on the margin of his favourite lake, fast asleep in the enjoyment of a pleasant "siesta" in the genial warmth of the noon-day sun. When in the humour for indulging this desire he invariably chose a kindly hollow, sheltered and grassy, shelving down to the water's edge, but always facing towards the south. Many are the tales we have heard of those who had been fortunate enough to discover a Water Bull in this condition. Should the awe-struck beholder manage to muster courage enough, steal up unobserved, and snatch a few hairs from his shaggy mane ere ever the brute had time to waken up and grasp his daring victim, the feat, even though it might prove fatal, would be related, by ardent believers for years to come, to the admiration and terror of both old and young at many an eager fireside circle in the

surrounding district. Should the brave adventurer, however, succeed in making good his escape in possession of this lucky tuft, he would, henceforward, be destined to enjoy all the happinesses of life—have plenty of money, be successful in love, become the head of a large family of sons, and on every occasion of war or feud, be sure to obtain the victory over his enemy. But it was not less certain that any one who benefited for a time by a voluntary contact with the Evil One in whatever form, was equally sure to leave the world in connexion with some sudden and awful calamity.

We are not to suppose that the Water Bull lived a life of celibacy manifesting no sympathy whatever for his more civilised congeners whose proper place of abode was on the land. In the minds of many, there was not the least doubt that he regularly wandered to some distance from his crystal-paved retreats to interbreed, at the usual season, with one or more of the domestic herds which were sent up by the farmers and cottars from the lower districts to the hill shielings for their Summer grazings. To the initiated these half demon hybrids were easily enough distinguished. The peculiar characteristics were said to have been two notched ears, a pair of soft leathery dewlaps, the tail short and bushy, as well as a curiously brindled hide, together with a clear aquatic spread of the fore and hind legs, each of which, it was observed, terminated in a hoof unusually black and glossy. They invariably carried the head high above the level of the back-bone, while the eyes, which were placed rather askance in the skull, were pearly bright and full sized ; all which gave the animals much of a wild and scared-like appearance.

An old tradition states that a farmer in Lynemore sometime about the beginning of the last century one day discovered, among the young of his Highland cattle, two calves of this breed, which, as was to be expected, he became especially anxious to rear as they looked so large, plump and high spirited. Accordingly he

gave orders that they should be at once secured and put along with the cows into the home park, and that every attention should be paid to them during the time they were being nourished on their mothers' milk. Thus, all went on well until weaning time came round when the calves, in due course, were separated from their dams and driven off to the nearest hill pasture. Next day he noticed that they had become exceedingly restless and increasingly fierce and fiery in all their movements. The farmer immediately called out every one of his servants and ordered them to drive home the stirks and see to it that they were safely housed with all speed. The task, however, proved to be entirely beyond the power of their united efforts, for, run as they might, away the two creatures scampered across the moor, and over the Aitnoch Hills with an excited squad of men and women in full chase. The pursuit was maintained with breathless energy until the calves arrived at Lochindorbh when the two brutes, which showed no signs of fatigue, raised their tails to a right angle in apparent delight at the appearance of the watery element, plunged into the loch, and were never again seen or heard of.

In the parish of Ardclach there are two fairly sized lochs—Belivat and Boath—each of which enjoyed, in a bygone generation, a considerable notoriety in its own locality as providing a solitary retreat for one of those dreadful amphibians. The Belivat Water Bull was an embodiment of no mean character. His shape, says the legend, was in general that of a greatly overgrown ox, black as ebony, with cloven hoofs, long spreading horns, and notched ears. In addition to the roots and leaves of the water lily, he fed upon the rough sedges and other kinds of aquatic plants to be found on, or near, the margin of the loch. At times when his pastures had become more than usually bare, he has been heard by the good people of Holly Bush on the opposite brae of Cairnbar, giving vent to his distress in fearful midnight bellowings, which roused the echoes of the hills for miles and miles around. On these occasions he was known to be par-

ticularly fierce and dangerous, and would often wander to considerable distances from the loch in search of a meal of human flesh to allay the gnawing cravings with which he was tortured in such trying circumstances.

Once upon a time, in connexion with an experience of this kind, when he was suffering from more than an ordinary scarcity, the Water Bull left his natural element early one lovely afternoon in the shape of a beautiful, sleek, and docile horse, all ready saddled and bridled, and waylaying a band of children on their way across the moor, succeeded in attracting their attention and thereafter inducing them to leave the right path and run up to him. Catching hold of him by the bridle, they were rather inclined for a little to doubt from his beautiful appearance the reality of their good fortune, but finding the animal in every way so gentle and accommodating, a few of the boys, very naturally, resolved to get on his back and enjoy a pleasant ride. Nor did they find that this familiarity on their part was in any way to be resented by their new and tractable friend. To their great delight they found that he was likely to behave himself in every way to their entire satisfaction. By and bye, in the course of a lively canter over the moor, he cunningly contrived to approach the edge of a dark mossy tarn, believed to be not only of unfathomable depth but at the same time connected by means of some mysterious subterranean passages, with the lowest abysses in the loch of Belivat, which lies in the immediate vicinity. Making a sudden deflection towards this secret entrance, he boldly sprang into the lakelet, and immediately sank with his precious burden beneath the surface of the liquid element, and no doubt devoured their lifeless bodies one by one at his leisure. The lamentation on all hands, as might have been expected over such a sad catastrophe, was both vehement and distressing, and the black pool, in corroboration of the truth of the tradition, is to this day occasionally referred to by the older inhabitants as the Children's Loch.

Cock-fighting is a very old as well as an exceedingly cruel sport. It is believed to have been introduced into England by the Romans nearly two thousand years ago, when it at once became highly popular among all classes of the community over the country. From the earliest records we find that the pastime was a great favourite with school boys, and frequently patronised even by princes and kings themselves. In later times it was annually observed in connexion with the religious festival of Shrovetide or "Brose Day," as it was called in Scotland; being one of those indulgences or licensed amusements permitted by the Church, to the faithful within her pale, before entering upon the penitential period of Lent. Great interest was specially manifested among the lads in the various parishes as the day approached, and every preparation was made in order that the great fighting match might be as complete as possible in all its details. During the whole of the previous week, the boys were chiefly occupied in scouring the district for cocks; settling for the election of the two opposing leaders; and at the same time endeavouring to decide under whose banner they were themselves to appear. In the celebration of this barbarous sport Ardclach formed no exception to the general rule for many a year. Under the incumbency of the late Mr Falconer, who was parochial school master from 1790 to 1837, cock-fighting, we are glad to say, was discontinued in his school much earlier than in some of the neighbouring parishes, although it was practised to a considerably later date in the Society School at Fornighty.

On the morning of the great day, the boys might be seen eagerly wending their way towards the scene of action, each youth carrying at least one bird, while the leaders were expected to bring up a number somewhat in accordance with the social standing of their parents in the district. When all had assembled the scholars entered the schoolroom, which had been previously prepared, and proceeded to arrange themselves with their respective "captains," on opposite sides of the building under the

presidency of the schoolmaster himself, who levied a small fee for each bird, and on these occasions invariably acted as an absolute umpire in cases of dispute.

One to one the cocks were pitted against each other in fierce and mortal combat, and as either fell exhausted, or fled from the conflict, its place was immediately supplied by a fresh bird from the contingent of the losing party. Thus the struggle went on for hours until the last unbeaten cock remained in possession of the blood-stained floor. The "captain" of the side to which it belonged was thereupon acknowledged victor, and in the parish of Cawdor the conquering fowl, in most cases all torn and clotted, which had been the means of obtaining for its master such a distinguished honour, was itself impressed to share the dignity of the occasion by having affixed on its poor lacerated head a small crown, now in Cawdor Castle, bearing the proud title, "Rex Gallorum."

In many of those encounters, not a few of the birds were found to decline the contest altogether and chose to effect a disgraceful retreat, in the vague belief, no doubt, that "They who fight and run away, may live to fight another day." In this particular warfare, however, the Fates had pronounced against the principle, for the vain subterfuge, in their case, proved only a "Leap from the frying-pan into the fire," as the schoolmaster had not only the benefit of picking up the carcasses of the slain birds but the privilege of confiscating for his own use, the whole of the "fugies," as they were contemptuously called. In some parishes, although happily, so far as we have been able to learn, not in Ardclach, these were again subjected in due course to the heartless doom of being tied with a piece of string to a stake driven into the playground, and thrown at, with short clubs, until the victim was either killed outright or so completely maimed that it became incapable of exciting the passions of the unfeeling youths who were glorying over the sad scene.

The origin of this latter sport is entirely lost in the dark ages of the past. The Legend, however, accounts for it on this wise :—During the period when the Danes ruled in England, the Saxons were held in a state of abject slavery and groaned under the tyranny of their foreign masters. In one of the towns, the inhabitants after consultation resolved to make a bold attempt for freedom. A dozen of their bravest men were chosen, and volunteered to repair secretly to the town house on a dark Winter night, endeavour to overpower the guard, and seize the weapons which were stored in the armoury. Thereafter, on a preconcerted signal the patriotic party were to issue from their huts and fall upon the invaders. No sooner had the men succeeded in entering the building than the noise disturbed the cocks which were roosting among the rafters overhead, and a loud crowing was the result. This unusual commotion alarmed the watchmen, who instantly beat to arms, secured the conspirators and forthwith had them all put to death. Years after, when the Danes had been driven from the country, the townsmen, remembering the sad disaster, are said to have invented the diversion of throwing at the cocks in the manner referred to, in revenge for the hard bondage entailed upon their fellow-countrymen on account of the ill-timed crowing in the guard house.

The day's proceedings were usually wound up at the home of the victor, where the lads expected to receive a liberal entertainment in the form of a supper and ball at his own expense in honour of the event. For weeks afterwards the gallantry of the brave birds which had succeeded in vanquishing the greatest number of opponents, and were the most severely wounded and torn up at the moment of victory, formed the favourite subject of endless exciting narratives by the boys and their friends both in the school and over the parish.

Several attempts were made from time to time to put down cock-fighting, but it lingered on until a late period in many parts of the country. It was, however, finally prohibited in 1849

under severe penalties contained in Act of Parliament 12 and 13 Vict. c. 92.

Of the many finely wooded hollows which occur at intervals along the Findhorn, there are few whose picturesque seclusion will bear the least comparison with that beautiful spot on the left bank consecrated, we believe, long before the Scottish Reformation as the Burying Ground of Ardclach. The immediate surroundings present a very harmonious combination of woodland, crag, and grassy slope, while the calm repose is pleasantly relieved by the sound of the rushing stream over its stony channel towards the sea.

The soil is the best for all practical purposes that could be desired. It is a dry alluvial deposit of a small prehistoric lake, laid down ere yet the river current had succeeding in cutting a passage for itself through the rocky barrier on the north side of the church.

After erecting a place of worship in early Christian times, the patrons always endeavoured to obtain the remains of some noted saint. It was considered highly meritorious to have them interred within the choir area, or, if possible, under the altar itself. Thus it came to pass that a strong desire would gradually spring up in the minds of the living, but especially the dying, to have their ashes laid to rest beside those who were believed to be eminent for piety and good works. It is, therefore, to the extension of this practice that we are able to trace the origin of all our churchyards.

There appears to be no difference of opinion, in this country, as to the position which a corpse ought to occupy when placed in the grave. To await the dawn of a glorious day the remains are invariably laid on the back in the attitude of restful sleep, and so as to lie in a line running directly parallel with the length of the church, the head, if possible, towards the west and the feet pointing to the east. This custom is said to have arisen from a free

interpretation of two Scriptural passages having a distinct reference to Christ's second coming:—(1) "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east," and (2) "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."

The first Protestant Church, founded about the middle of the seventeenth century, still stands in the centre of God's acre with the tombs of many departed generations, all quietly sleeping under the sacred shadow of its grace. Simple and unassuming though the exterior may be, it is far more in accordance with the romantic surroundings than any pseudo-Gothic structure could possibly be.

From the gateway onwards by the left side of the footpath, there runs a long narrow strip of ground apparently quite neglected, and distinguished only by the melancholy characteristic that it is entirely devoid of even the humblest memorials. This is the Strangers' Area, and contains the mortal remains of several homeless pilgrims, who, after finding their way into the parish were suddenly arrested by the Last Enemy and lay down to die without a known friend to cheer or soothe them in the last hours of their earthly suffering. One we saw interred here was a poor mendicant Jew—Joseph Hamil by name—mayhap, born in the Promised Land, and brought up among those hills, valleys, and scenes with which we associate memories the most sacred on earth. Not satisfied, we may rest assured, with his native prospects, he parted hopefully from his nearest relatives as well as most intimate acquaintances, and set out with a light heart into the wide, wide world in search of fortune and happiness. As he journeyed onward, many and varied, no doubt, were his successive experiences, but all his most cherished schemes only ended in privation, loss, and chilling disappointment. At length losing all self-respect, he adopted begging as a last resource, and, with no desire to return, he wandered on farther and farther from the land of his birth. On his way through this parish, his feeble

frame suddenly gave way, and sinking down on the lonely moor, he yielded his spirit in a foreign country without a hand to help, or friend to console him in the last moments of anguish and suffering. In a few days the poor remains were accidentally discovered, and hastily conveyed by dutiful, but unsympathetic officials to the Strangers' Nook. Here, they were laid to rest beside other unfortunates whose unknown histories were only different in minor detail. Scarcely had the formal ceremony been finished than the deceased was forgotten, and left to sleep in neglected oblivion among the noteless dead till the morning of the Great and Final Day.

Another blank space close by the outside foundation of the church, marks the area formerly set apart for the interment of any unbaptised children. These social waifs were popularly referred to as the "Tarrans." Poor things, the world gave them a very cold reception. Buried after sunset in this secluded corner, the parishioners confidently believed that it would be all but impossible for any Christian people to inadvertently stray across their unhallowed remains. Such an occurrence would have been considered a terrible calamity. It was enough to be told that their forlorn apparitions had occasionally been seen, but oftener heard, in the adjoining woods on stormy nights, sadly bewailing the unfortunate condition of their hapless lot.

Throughout the remaining area, the ground is thickly set with tombstones of various pretensions, but none sufficiently striking to merit any special notice, either on account of their design, or the delicacy of their execution. In several instances the graves are simply indicated by a green turfy mound, or rude head stone imperfectly lettered. Few of the lichen-incrusted memorials appear to have been inscribed with anything beyond the age and initial letters of the names of the deceased, whose long forgotten existence they thus struggle to commemorate. One table-stone of the eighteenth century is decorated with a few common-place symbols of mortality—an hour-glass, two winged angels, a skull,

a coffin and a spade, as well as a couple of human femurs placed crosswise. Nothing of an epitaphian nature occurs, and the inscriptions are destitute of any special interest to the casual visitor. They are all concise, but frequently bear strong testimony to a useful and blameless life on the part of the deceased. From them we learn that the sleepers in general resided as tenants, or agricultural labourers, within the parish. But one event happened to every one. After performing their respective duties with more or less credit, and figuring for a few short years among their fellows, they all died and were gathered to their fathers. As a rule, the remains were followed to the graveyard by not a few sorrowing relatives and neighbours. The last resting places of the well-to-do were marked by the most durable stone in the district, and the hallowed spots for a longer or shorter period continued to be cherished, and visited from time to time as circumstances would permit. Sooner or later, however, the memory of even the most dearly beloved is altogether forgotten, and every trace of their existence, except in few cases, perishes from the community.

The Castle of Lochindorbh, now in ruins, is situated on a small island less than an acre in extent in the Loch of this name. The larger water area lies chiefly in the parish of Cromdale, while on the western side, the remainder trends for a short distance into Edinkillie. From end to end the surface measures slightly over two miles by about three quarters of a mile at the greatest breadth. In general the water is rather shallow, but the dip is considerably more than the average as we approach the Castle.

All around, the landscape is monotonous, tame and disappointingly dreary. A mountain tarn shaded with dark frowning pines, and overhung by rough beetling crags, is grand and impressive, but here there is neither precipice, rock, nor steep bank, simply the brown undulating moorland stretching gradually upwards towards the base of the neighbouring hills. Lying amid this

uninterrupted quiet, it reflects at the present moment no other image than that of the sky overhead, and only presents on its unruffled waters a tinge of the dullest mossy hue. Thus, though there is little that is picturesque or striking about the environment of this lonely spot, yet most visitors after a little experience, come to enjoy the scene, and drink in health from the tonic mountain breezes. The Castle itself, either from a historical or antiquarian point of view, is an object of the greatest interest. It would appear to have been a development of the still older Castle Roy in Abernethy.

The date of its erection, however, has never been ascertained, nor do ancient records throw any light on the founder's name. Tradition, indeed, tells of a wooden structure, perhaps in the form of a rude crannoge or log peel, as having originally occupied the site of the present Castle, but no remains have ever been discovered to indicate the likelihood of such an early lake dwelling. For centuries before, and even after the Castle comes into view, the whole district round the Loch formed one continued pine forest as dark and wild as the most gloomy imagination could well picture.

At a very early period, however, the Comyns of Badenoch held a great part of the Northern Highlands with Lochindorbh as a chief stronghold. The family claims to be descended from Charlemagne, and derives their name from the ancient house of de Comines, near Lille, on the French Border. When the Norman Invasion took place in 1066, A.D., one branch elected to follow the great Conqueror, and under his influence soon rose to eminence and power, both in England and Scotland. In the year 1230, A.D., a Comyn was Lord of Badenoch, and we find him frequently taking up his abode in this all but invincible fastness. Here, the semi-barbarous Chief in the plenitude of his unquestioned supremacy administered with a red hand those terrible powers of barony and regality by which the Royal authority, in the Highlands, was at times practically superseded. On the death of the infant

Scottish Queen, the Maiden of Norway, the Black John Comyn became a candidate for the Throne, as being descended from the old Celtic dynasty of King Duncan, through the daughter of his son Donald-bane. Comyn accepted the oaths offered to him by Edward I.—"The Longshanks" of English history—acknowledging him as Feudal Superior of Scotland. After Baliol was appointed to wear the vacant Crown, Comyn seems to have retired in disgust from public life and died soon after at Lochindorbh about the year 1300, A.D.

Hearing that his troops had been defeated in the north, Edward, in the exercise of his obstinate will, resolved to invade the rebel territory, and extend his iron rule from Berwick to John O' Groats. Meantime, Sir John Comyn had succeeded to the Lochindorbh estates, and become the popular Regent. Though aided in this capacity by Wallace and other patriots, he was unable to collect a sufficient force to meet the enemy in the open field. The English army, therefore, was practically unopposed in its advance through the kingdom, and its progress was marked with bloodshed and heartless devastation, at every step. The country lying in the line of his march was deserted by the terrified inhabitants, who fled to the mountains, forests, and inaccessible morasses over the Highlands. On his way north, the Lord of Lochindorbh and his cousin, the Earl of Buchan, meeting the King, had a private interview with him, and demanded that their other estates which had been unjustly bestowed upon English nobles, should be restored. Their propositions were treated at once with an unceremonious refusal, and in consequence Edward and the Scottish barons parted in great wrath. Finding themselves unable to make any headway against the Royal power, they each retired to their respective strongholds, where they resolved to defend themselves to the bitter end. On the 25th of September, 1303, A.D., Edward arrived at Lochindorbh Castle from Kinloss Abbey, where the monks, in the hope of substantial favour, gave His Majesty an entertainment such as became their distinguished

visitor. His object was, by carrying the war into the country of the Comyns, to crush them, and bring others of the nobility into due subjection. Having captured their chief fastness, the King found himself in a convenient position to despatch troops from his victorious army to overrun Badenoch and the adjacent districts. During his sojourn of nine days, not a few of the vanquished Chieftains presented themselves before him at the Castle, and on bended knee did homage for their estates.

The King and his Court devoted the intervals of public business to his favourite pastime of hunting, for which the district afforded ample opportunity. In view of this exciting sport, he had brought with him from England several packs of deer and wolf hounds. Spending the day in the great forest, the Royal party, usually bearing heavy bags, returned at night to their island retreat, No sooner was the King descried on his way down the adjacent wooded slopes than all in the Castle became astir with bustle and excited clamour. Boats were immediately despatched to the opposite shores, while the dull battlements and watch-towers were anon lit up with fir torches on every side. Reflecting their gloomy shadows on the dark surface of the Loch, the whole scene was wild and weird in the extreme. Hungry and fatigued with the day's hunting, the nobles and higher state officials assembled with all possible speed in the great hall, and under the presidency of Edward partook of a splendid feast, listening the while to the minstrels who struck their harps and sang of love, chivalry and war. The proud Monarch, who sat in pomp and pride, where nettles and cow-parsley now grow, was the Conqueror of Wales, the Terror of France and the Scourge of Scotland. But "Old times are changed, old manners gone," and a melancholy silence has succeeded to music and dancing, and the screech owl alone is heard, where the voice of joy and boisterous mirth resounded under the banner of England as it waved in the chill mountain breeze. The common soldiery, doomed to a harder fate, were less carefully provided for. Pitching their rude huts by the

water's edge, or sheltering themselves as best they could among the neighbouring pines, they nightly lit up, for their cheerless comfort, a thousand camp fires, which, sparkling and flickering in the gloomy darkness, chequered the margin of the Loch with an inconstant fringe of ruddy light.

During the stirring times which followed, this Fortress is occasionally mentioned in history. There is reason to believe that Edward greatly strengthened the defences, if he did not even rebuild the Castle, between the years 1303, and 1306, A.D. The ramparts cover the whole island, which seems to be chiefly composed of gravel and shingle. The masonry, which is believed to have been originally three storeys high, is built of granite, whinstone, and slate from the neighbouring hills, indicating an immense expenditure of time and money. It presents no trace of Norman architecture, nor, indeed, has any been observed among the early castles in Scotland. The oldest baronial remains show a style rather midway between the Classical and the Gothic. The ruins, which still exist, suggest to the mind a grim old Strength of the same type as that of Bothwell and Kildrummie. Like them the walls are blind on the outside, cemented with "grout," or run lime, and are more than seven feet thick. In form, Lochindorbh is an irregular quadrilateral, defended by a strong bell-shaped tower at each of its four angles. One only now remains. The curtain walls, which are tolerably entire, run down to the water's edge, if not even stretching into it on the south and partly on the east side. These are probably Edwardian additions, and it is curious to notice that on one side there is a strong arched portcullissed door leading to a large inclosure which had no ground communication with the Castle itself. By this means the whole of the island was so occupied that an attacking enemy could find no place on which to land, while such an arrangement, in time of peace, afforded ample space both for cattle and stores. In the event, however, of a body of men being rash enough to force an entrance, they would have quickly found

themselves in a death trap with no means of escape, and wholly at the mercy of the garrison within. Every port, window, or loop-hole, has the lintels, mouldings and facings of freestone, which must have been carried from the seaboard somewhere between Nairn and Forres. The principal gateway, which now appears as a large breach in the wall, was a pointed arch after the English style. It, too, contained a portcullis, but there was no barbican or flanking towers. From the insular position, as well as close proximity to the water, these defences were considered unnecessary. During the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Loch was a perfect security. No artificial fosse was at all to be compared to the wet ditch with which it was, and is still surrounded. Within the enclosed area at the east end of the Chapel, on the south side, is the usual dungeon keep—a square, strong erection with a round tower at one end. Here, many a poor captive has pined and groaned. Lying on a bed of heather or bracken, in this dark, loathsome cell, the prisoner's sufferings were often embittered by hearing sounds of mirth and revelry prolonged far into the midnight hours. The great hall was, no doubt, built entirely of wood, as was the case in most of the castles during that period. According to custom the interior was hung round with armour, and adorned with numerous trophies of the chase.

The Water Pit Vault may still be seen grinning with open mouth in the west wall and dipping well into the surrounding Loch. It was, we may be well sure, a horrible dungeon, where many a poor, miserable wretch, after suffering a short confinement, has passed gladly away into the eternal world. Like an ordinary draw-well, it originally descended as far under the level of the Loch as to leave about three feet of water over its paved bottom. The only entrance was by a narrow aperture from the adjoining court-yard, into what appeared to be no more than a small recess covered with large flags on the floor. By raising one of these as a trap-door, the spectator was able to look down several feet

through the dim shadows into the dreary vault below. From the upper chamber, the unhappy victim was lowered by a sturdy warder into the obscure depths beneath; always to shiver, and often to freeze, while standing thigh deep among the water. Shut up in such a dank hole must have been torture in its most refined stage. The prisoner could only stand; any other position being certain death by drowning.

To a visitor approaching Lochindorbh, the walls, now covered with lichens, present a yellowish tint, and seem from the low foundation on which they rest to spring immediately out of the surrounding Loch. As a Royal Fortress, it was erected with the view of being able to resist a lengthened and determined siege. Though strong in war, it was a dull and lonely place of abode in peace. Buried in the heart of a boundless forest, far away among the pathless hills, in a broad and cheerless lake, men looked upon it as all but impregnable to ordinary military tactics. During the fourteenth century, indeed, it rivalled in extent, and in the strength of its defences any of the national castles over the country.

During the interregnum which followed the death of the Maid of Norway in 1290, the Red John Comyn was one of the Wardens or Governors of Scotland, and for a time greatly distinguished himself by his gallant resistance to the English claim. At a conference which took place in Stirling Castle, he entered into an agreement with Robert the Bruce to place him upon the throne. Suspected of betraying their plan to Edward, Comyn fell under the dagger of Bruce before the High Altar in the Church of the Minorite Friars at Dumfries on the 4th of February, 1306 A.D. Two months afterwards, Bruce was crowned at Scone and the Lord of Badenoch having revolted, Lochindorbh, as well as his other estates, were forfeited to the nation. In the struggle which followed, to avenge the murdered Earl, the power of the Comyns was effectually broken after the battle of Inverury in 1308, and the name of this great house so utterly sank into obscurity that,

in the words of a contempory Chronicle, "There was no memorial left of it in the land, save the orisons of the monks of Deer," whose monastry had been founded by William Comyn, Earl of Buchan, in 1219 A.D.

Sir Andrew Moray of Petty and Bothwell was a faithful friend of Bruce's party, and by it was more than once elected Regent of Scotland during the minority of David II. For a time, Comyn the Earl of Athole, held the same office under Baliol in the English interest. Kildrummie Castle, near the head of the Don, was one of the four fortresses which stood out for the King. This nobleman laid siege to it while under the charge of Lady Christian Bruce, sister of Robert, and wife of Sir Andrew Moray. Her husband, with a considerable force, hastened to relieve its heroic defender. A severe struggle took place in a neighbouring wood, where the Earl was defeated and slain under a great oak tree, and his followers put to flight. His widowed Countess, now in great alarm, immediately fled with her infant son and heir, for safety to Lochindorbh Castle. Thither, Sir Andrew pursued her, but as the place could not be easily taken, he encircled the Loch, and tried in vain to batter down the walls with heavy missiles thrown across the lake from the nearest shore. The spot on the south east bank where the besiegers directed their engines against the ramparts is still pointed out. Hearing from the poor Countess herself of this terrible state of affairs, Edward III. started from Perth at the head of an army twenty thousand strong, and pushed on to rescue the captive at Lochindorbh. In these circumstances, the brave Sir Andrew was too prudent to risk a conflict with such a force, but he did not move his troops until the English were close upon him, and all his outposts driven back. In a great panic, the soldiers pressed him to order a retreat. "There is no need for haste," replied the Regent calmly, and being about to hear mass, would not permit his devotions to be hindered. At length, when his equerries had brought out his horse, and every one expected that the march was to begin, he

turned with great coolness to see that all the girths were tight and secure. When buckling on his armour, one of the thongs chanced to break, but he leisurely took a skin from his baggage, cut a suitable strap and, with his own hand, mended the fracture. Then arraying his men in close column he mounted his charger, entered the forest by a well-known road, and retired along the Findhorn until they came to Sluie, where they forded the river by a secret pass and were again safe under the ramparts of Darnaway Castle. Baffled with all his followers to get on his track, Edward returned to Lochindorbh, and, to the great joy of the distressed Countess and her son, bore them away in his train to England. No sooner had the enemy gone south, than the Regent appeared upon the scene and captured many of the castles which Edward had garrisoned, with Lochindorbh among them. Sir Andrew died in his own castle at Avoch, on the Moray Firth, in 1338, while the war was still raging on all sides. He was a good patriot and a great loss to his country.

For a short time this Highland Fortress seems to have been used as a state prison and confined, at least, one personage of national importance. William Bulloch was a warlike churchman of unknown parentage, but possesed of great military talent. Under Edward Baliol, the vassal king, he was appointed Chamberlain of Scotland and Governor of the Castles of St. Andrews and Cupar. In this capacity he was greatly trusted by the English party. A year or two before his death, Sir Andrew Moray laid siege to the Castle of Cupar, then defended by Bulloch, but finding it impossible to make any impression on the Stronghold, he was obliged to raise the siege. Soon after, however, for an adequate consideration, Bullock was induced to sell himself to the Scots, and deliver up the Castle of Cupar. Such a transaction was ill calculated to maintain implicit confidence in his future official integrity under Sir Andrew Moray's government. In course of time, fearing that he had, for selfish reasons, again entered into secret communication with his English friends, the Regent accused

him of treason, and ordered him to be deposed from his high office Immediately thereafter he was thrown into the dungeon keep at Lochindorbh, where he was soon forgotten, and ultimately allowed to die of starvation and neglect.

Shortly after the death of Sir Andrew Moray, the Castle became the property of the Crown. In recognition of some important national service David II. bestowed the forest of Lochindorbh upon Symon Reed, his Constable of Edinburgh Castle, on condition that he would deliver to the King as Feudal Superior three arrows at Inverness, whenever they might be wanted. The terms appear easy enough, yet the estate does not seem to have remained long in the Constable's possession. Robert II. ascended the throne in 1371 A.D., and among his first acts we find him conferring by Royal Charter the Lordship of Badenoch, as well as the Castle, Forest and Land of Lochindorbh upon his fourth son, Alexander Stewart—"In the same manner as the deceased John Comyn and his predecessors had held the same."

In History, this nobleman is styled the Earl of Buchan, but from the savageness of his nature, he is better known in the north as the Wolfe of Badenoch. Few young men were ever better provided with lands and lordships, both by marriage and Royal Charter, than he was. Yet, notwithstanding his wide domains, he speedily quarrelled with the Bishop of Moray that he might obtain more. As Lord of Badenoch he insisted that all the Church lands in that province, were held under him. Refusing to own a superior, the Bishop was summoned to appear at the Standing Stones of Easter Kingussie. As might be expected, the finding of the Judges was in favour of the Earl. In return the Bishop threatened the censure of the Church upon any one who should venture to enforce the decreets of Court. Next day, in presence of a large company of local gentlemen, the Bishop and Wolfe of Badenoch met in Ruthven Castle. Here, the discussion was renewed, and angry words were freely passed between both parties. At length his Lordship was persuaded to drop the claim,

and in proof of good faith in this agreement, all the documents relative to the process were immediately committed to the flames. Thus far, all seemed right. But in his domestic capacity the Lord of Badenoch was unprincipled, heartless and cruel. He ill-treated his wife, the Countess of Ross, who was forced, on that account, to leave him. In her absence, he became enamoured of a woman named Mariota Athyn, who lived with him on the most intimate terms for many years. By her he had five illegitimate sons, each of whom in a high degree, inherited the reckless impetuosity and lawless violence of his father's character. At last, the Church was invoked to interfere on behalf of his lawful wife—a proceeding which exasperated the Wolfe of Badenoch in a terrible manner. Disregarding the bargain in Ruthven Castle, he seized the Church lands, and, in consequence, was excommunicated at the High Altar by the Bishop of Moray from the "Holy Mother Church, to be cut off, like a rotten and diseased branch, to fall headlong into the Pit, there to be consumed by eternal fire."

When this anathema was announced to the Earl at Lochindorbh by an accredited monk from Elgin, the cleric was at once ordered to be arrested and thrown into the Water Pit Vault, where he remained for some hours. Furious with rage the Wolfe, having matured his plans, sallied out from his stronghold in May, 1390, and, at the head of a fierce band rode, by way of Darnaway, to Forres, and reduced the manse of the Archdeacon to ashes. This done, he next set fire to one end of the church, which shared a similar fate. Just as he and his incendiaries were about to mount their horses and gallop to the hills, they heedlessly fired one or two of the adjacent houses. These tenements being chiefly composed of wood and roofed with thatch, blazed up with such vehemence that the conflagration threatened for some time to embrace the whole town.

Nor was this all. The Wolfe, still burning with rage, vowed that the Bishop must be bearded in his own den. One night,

therefore, a few weeks later in June of the same year, the burghers of Elgin had just retired to rest at the usual time, and the echoes of the Vesper Hymn had scarcely died away within the long aisles of the venerable Cathedral when a band of armed horsemen from Lochindorbh was heard entering the town on the west side. From the drawn windows along the main street they were noticed to pull up near the College, and in a short time the whole city was moved to its very centre with shouts of "Fire! Fire! The Wolfe! The Wolfe!" This name alone was enough to strike terror into the heart of every man, woman, and child, to its utmost bounds. Anon, the towers and spire of the Cathedral were observed to be wrapt in one devouring blaze, while the interior was lighted up with a brilliant sheet of dazzling flame. The church of St. Giles, the Maisondieu, together with eighteen manses of the Canons, in a few hours showed only as blackened skeletons in the dark uncertain gloom. This terrible deed was the work of a raving maniac, and an act of purest vandalism for which no earthly punishment could adequately atone.

Heedless of the misery inflicted on the innocent people, the Wolfe returned to his island stronghold at Lochindorbh exulting in the hope that the interference on the part of the Bishop in his domestic affairs had been fully avenged. The dull monotony, however, within the surly fortress only served to sharpen the stings of conscience, and quicken the gnawings of an ever present and pitiless remorse. Thus tortured by a cruel mental reaction, his iron frame began to give way, and gradually he sank into a state of sullen inactivity. A week or two more, and he was completely prostrated on a sick bed—the victim of a low but rapidly consuming fever. To all appearance, subdued and broken, the Wolfe of Badenoch lay as a helpless child in the terrible grasp of the Last Enemy. Fully convinced that he would never rise again, all his minions deserted him and attended to their own interests. Chief among these was his guilty paramour, Lady Mariota Athyn, the mother of his five illegitimate sons. For this woman he had

shamelessly neglected his own lawful wife, and even braved the malediction of the Bishop of Moray. And now, in his dire affliction, instead of watching by the sick bed and trying to quench his burning thirst, Mariota ranged the Castle, using every possible opportunity to ransack her Lord's private repositories, in order to possess herself of their most valued contents, the moment she found him a powerless corpse. But, "Where there is life, there is hope"; and so it proved in the case before us. By and by, when the climax was passed, strength began to return, and with it a great improvement in his natural character. The Lady Mariota had now shown herself in her true colours, and the Earl at last came to appraise her at a proper value. Cowed and disgraced, she was immured in a distant stronghold, where she spent the remainder of her life in poverty and neglect. Soon after, the Wolfe was persuaded to seek by penance, to be again received within the pale of the Holy Mother Church. To this the Bishop agreed, and the strange humiliation actually took place in the Black Friar's Monastery at Perth, in the presence of a great concourse of the highest dignitaries both in the Church and State.

"There has always," says Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, "been a very common belief in this country, that when a wicked man suddenly and unexpectedly reforms his life, the circumstance is a sure forewarning of his approaching death. It was so with the Wolfe of Badenoch, for he lived only two or three years after the great reformation that was so surprisingly wrought in him. That the Earl did not fail to make good use of the remnant of his life in wiping off old scores with the Church by making it large donations from his well-filled coffers may be guessed from the curious epitaph—"Bonæ Memoriæ," to his Good Memory—which still exists in raised black-letter characters round the edge of the now empty sarcophagus in which his body was deposited in the Cathedral of Dunkeld. He died on the 20th February, 1394, A.D."

For some forty years from this time there is a pause in the history of Lochindorbh, but this Castle comes again into promin-

ence during the early part of the fifteenth century. James II., or the Scottish King of the Fiery Face, succeeded to the vacant Throne in 1437. During his minority, the turbulent nobility, missing the strong arm of the Poet King, "Did every one that which was right in his own eyes," and boldly carried on their private feuds with an impetuosity and appalling bloodshed which seemed to defy all constituted authority. Plunder and rapine, as a consequence, filled the land, while the poor inhabitants were distracted and torn with oppression and terrible misery. Chief among the rebel Lords was the great Earl of Douglas, whose overgrown power, for a few years, threatened even the existence of the Throne itself. Proud, daring, and chivalrous, William, the eighth Earl, managed to captivate the young King's affections so entirely that he appeared to exercise almost complete control over him and his policy in the State. For the greater aggrandisement of his own family, this nobleman induced James to confer the vacant Earldom of Moray upon Archibald Douglas, his third brother. It was not long after when the young King discovered to his cost that he had done far too much for that ambitious House, and he therefore resolutely set himself to correct his early mistakes by every means in his power. Becoming aware of the Royal intention, the Douglas prepared himself to maintain his position by force of arms. Fierce and prolonged was the struggle which followed, but in due time the crisis came in the supper-room at Stirling Castle, where the unsuspecting Earl fell beneath the dagger of the Fiery Monarch in February, 1452. In revenge, Archibald, the newly created Earl of Moray, attacked and set fire to the town of Stirling. Fleeing immediately thereafter to the Highlands, he strongly fortified the Castles of Darnaway and Lochindorbh, and raised the standard of rebellion against the King. The contest, however, was short lived, for notwithstanding the aid received from the powerful House of Douglas, he was overthrown and slain at Arkinholme, Dumfriesshire, in 1455 and all his followers scattered to the winds. Six

weeks later, for this and similar acts of treason, the deceased Earl of Moray was disgraced and his estates and title forfeited to the Crown, while James himself took possession of Darnaway Castle. No sooner had the young King felt the fascination of the district than he took means to enjoy it. "He chose Darnaway," says Cosmo Innes, "for his own hunting seat, and completed the extensive repairs and new erections which the Douglas Earl had begun. The massive beams of oak and solid structure of the roof of the new work described in these accounts are still in part recognisable in the great hall at Darnaway, which popular tradition, ever leaning toward a fabulous antiquity, ascribes to Earl Randolph, but which is certainly of this period."

Almost contemporary with the building of Cawdor Castle, we find James II. granting a commission under the Great Seal, on the 5th March, 1455, at Aberdeen, to William, Thane of Cawdor, his beloved squire, to raze and destroy the House and Fortalice of Lochindorbh, in a moorland Loch beyond the Findhorn, as its situation and strength were considered dangerous to the Royal power. The Deed itself runs in the following terms :—

"Quia per alias litteras nostras fecimus ordinavimus et deputavimus dilectum nostrum Willelmum Thanum de Caldor nostrum factorem pro dejectione destructione et subversione domus et fortalicii de Lochindorb pröut in eisdem litteris nostris desuper confectis plenius continetur. Nos heredes et successores nostri warrantizabimus et warrantizabunt defendemus et defendent contra omnes mortales dictum Willelmum Thanum de Caldor, heredes sues et assignatos penes dejectionem et subversionem dicte domus et fortalicii de Lochindorb."

The work of demolition was duly carried out and the Thane left the place very much as we now see it.

In the Exchequer Accounts for the year 1458 there is an entry recording the payment of £24 to Campbell of Cawdor for the razing of the Castle of Lochindorbh by command of the King two years before he was killed at Roxburgh. The original is in

Latin:—"Et Thano de Caldor pro dejectione castri de Lochindorbh de mandato Domini Regis testantibus Domino Episcopo Moraviensi et thesavrario mandatum ipso Thano fatente receptum super compotum de anno compoti xxiiii li."

A local tradition asserts that the massive iron-grated door now on the dungeon keep at Cawdor Castle was carried a distance of at least thirteen miles across the hills on the shoulders of a powerful Highlander, known in Gaelic as "Donal gun mhàthair,' or Donald without a mother. For many years the lands of Lochindorbh formed part of the princely domains of the Earl of Moray. But by an agreement dated at Darnaway, on the 31st October, 1608, he sold certain holdings to Sir John Campbell of Cawdor, "Together with the Loch, buildings, and adjoining shielings, lying within the Forrestrie of the Knock." Some time afterwards Lochindorbh was transferred from the Cawdor Estate by excambion or exchange to the Earl of Seafield, in whose hands it has now remained for many years.

On the edge of the Findhorn, near the Mansion House at Glenferness, in the centre of a small field there stands an interesting relic of great antiquity, locally known as the Princess Stone. It is an erect slab of fine siliceous freestone, equally durable with marble or granite, and partially sunk in the soil. The dimensions, as given by the late Rev. Donald Mitchell, Minister of Ardclach, in a letter of 10th December, 1798, to Mr George Chalmers of Auldbar, are, "Eight feet long, two broad, five inches thick, with five and a half feet above the ground." It is now obliquely cracked near the middle, but, by the direction of the Earl of Leven and Melville, it has been recently supported on each side with an upright jamb of sandstone. It exhibits on both faces a number of sculptured symbols, all of which have become very much obliterated by the atmospheric changes acting upon them through some ten or twelve centuries.

This fine monolith is one of a series of similarly sculptured

pillars, found most commonly in the north-east of Scotland, and is unmistakably a work of Celtic art, belonging to the early Christian period which commences in this country about the middle of the sixth century. The purpose of such monuments and their characteristic sculptures have been the subject of much speculation among the antiquaries of our day. The emblematic figures on the Glenferness stone were all cut strong and beautiful in "alto relievo" and show considerable artistic skill and taste.

At the upper end, on one side, are still seen what appears to be the remains of a partially obliterated Celtic Cross, decorated throughout with the usual interlaced work or chain pattern of the period, and exhibiting four cup-shaped recessions at the intersections of the arms of the cross. The two spaces on each side of the shaft are occupied with one or two involute figures cut in simple outline. The same style of decoration, with the divergent spirals and fretwork, slightly varied, is employed over the rest of the surface all the way down. At the base, in a panel beneath the Cross, two figures are depicted in the act of embracing each other in mutual reconciliation, and are supposed, in Christian symbol, to illustrate the doctrine that

> "Mercy and Truth are met together:
> Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other."

The hieroglyphs on the reverse side are numerous, and were engraved in a style which does credit to a native artist living more than a thousand years ago. From long exposure, the representation atop, is greatly weather-worn, but enough yet remains to show the figure of a monstrous serpent all coiled and intertwisted as if writhing under the influence of intense suffering. Underneath is the likeness of an archer, resting on one knee, in the act of discharging an arrow from a cross-bow. As the object originally figured in the space immediately in front is quite worn off, the completion of the design must now be entirely conjectural. We can, therefore, only hazard the guess that the spiritual lesson therein portrayed may have had reference to the faithful pastor

of that age seeking the conversion of a sinner by "Smiting him in the form of a hare, a goat, a wild boar, or a stag" with the "dart of humility," in accordance with the teaching of an old manuscript of the thirteenth century.

Below, and on the right side is an outline of the crescent symbol, and a bent rod. On the same side of the monolith, it may be observed that the grotesque figure of some fabulous creature occurs twice. It is generally supposed to represent an elephant, and to have been the mistaken idea of the artist who had only heard of such an animal, but obviously from his delineation, could never have seen one. The head, which is long enough to reach the ground, is provided with a pair of enormous jaws, while the trunk is made to spring from the forehead and stretch horizontally over the back towards the tail. But what seems a rather curious conception to introduce here is, that the body, all over, should be adorned with an imitation of prettily wrought interlacing or chain work—the whole being clearly that of some fierce and crafty monster, designed apparently to symbolise the Father of Evil himself. The centre is filled in with what, from its size and complexity, must be considered the leading device. Hitherto among antiquaries it has been generally known as the "spectacle" ornament, and consists of a pair of circles at a little distance, but communicating with each other by a couple of straps. Inside the circumference of both, there are six smaller rings, or bosses, arranged round a common one in the centre, now usually supposed to represent the seven stars. The intermediate space is traversed by the diagonal portion of the Z symbol while the sceptre-like ends of the parallel sections are decorated with elegance and skill. These, together with the whole of the other associated insignia, are now believed to be intensely Biblical and to have been inscribed, on this and similar monoliths, for Christian purposes under the direction of the early preachers of the Gospel. When entire and unwasted the Glenferness Stone must have been a very beautiful work of art.

In course of time the race by which these archaic symbolisms were executed gradually became extinct in the north of Scotland, while the new comers, although leaving them undisturbed in their original situations, manifested no further interest in them than as curious memorials left by the former inhabitants. A century or two later, and every vestige of their history appears to have been forgotten. The records were, indeed, intact, but not a single scholar to reveal their secrets. Nor can we account for the wonderful preservation to us of the monuments themselves, through ages of ignorance and superstition, except from the instinctive veneration with which the popular mind regarded the hidden truths enshrined behind their mysterious characters. During a still later period when exaggerated story or pleasing romance formed the only literature of the natives, we are able to imagine pretty correctly the peculiar circumstances by which the well known Legend of a bygone generation came to be connected with the stone pillar at Glenferness. No doubt, the two human figures portrayed in mutual embrace on the obverse side suggested the reference to the local incident in which a Prince and Princess are said to have lost their lives.

According to the beautiful story of the seventeenth century, the predatory warfare from which the romantic occurrence is borrowed must have taken place some time prior to the final overthrow of the Norse invaders in the year 1010, during the reign of Malcolm II. Taking up this variety of the tale, we have to assume that the old castle of Lochindorbh, now in ruins, and situated on a small island near the side of the lake, was a massive Strength of considerable importance in the district. All through the narrative it is represented as a Royal residence, near which the local forces assembled on the eve of a severe engagement which occurred in the vicinity of Dunearn, for the purpose of checking a daring incursion by the restless Norsemen.

"The Raven of Denmark," says the old Legend, "stretched his broad wing o'er Moray's fair fields." Poising himself for one

fell swoop, he darted down among the industrious inhabitants along the sea-board, with the intention of settling his wild hordes in comfortable homes all over the lowlands of that fertile province. To avert such a calamity the Moray men turned out in great force, and encountered the Danes a few miles inland from where the River Findhorn empties itself into the sea. The struggle which ensued was very unequal: the enemy having not only mustered in overwhelming numbers, but their bowmen discharged cloud after cloud of arrows with deadly effect among the Celtic ranks. All day the sounds of military strife could be heard far and near as the opposing battalions, shouting their respective slogans, closed in a hand to hand conflict on the open field. Towards nightfall the noise of battle began, indeed, to die away, but the rocky echoes from the Findhorn side were still answering to the shrieks of the wounded and dying from every quarter. Despite the Moray men having kept their blood-soaked ground for a long time, and fought with the determination of patriots who were resolved to die as hard as possible in defence of the lives and properties of everyone dear to them, it became sadly evident towards the evening that the power of the Sea King was to prevail, albeit the victory had cost him an enormous price :—

> "Each fell not till crushed by a hundred foes!
> And dire vengeance had soothed their dying throes."

Thus, the fortune of war had proved a terrible calamity to the brave defenders. Henceforward, a wide district was forced to lay itself for some time in helpless submission at the conqueror's feet.

It was not long till the poor rustics had reason enough to regret the result of the struggle, for we read that "The Findhorn's dark heights became lighted anon by far fiercer rays." The Norsemen, unchecked in their wild designs, began to overrun the whole province even to its southern uplands, harrying and pillaging and burning without mercy. Penetrating into every strath and glen among the dark blue hills, they inflicted every kind of

atrocity upon the poor defenceless inhabitants. During their progress along the upper reaches of the river these roving marauders, to their great surprise, found that once more there was to be an appeal to the edge of the sword. In due course, the opposing forces were marching towards a rough grassy flat in the vicinity of the Doune, a short way below where Dulsie Bridge now spans the stream. Here King Fergus, who had arrived a few hours earlier, direct from Lochindorbh with a powerful body of Highlanders, managed to take up a good position, and was resolved to make a determined stand for the purpose of stopping, if possible, the cruel tyranny of his ruthless foe. Before the enemy's van had emerged from the Glenferness woods, on the right bank of the river, he succeeded in throwing a select body of his men behind the screen of a neighbouring thicket as a reserve contingent for future use. Very soon the two armies stood face to face—the Findhorn alone lying between them. Scarcely had the men of Denmark forded the stream—

> "Nor yet had they formed on the meadow's side,
> When by bursting yells the skies were rent,
> With the gleam of arms glowed the firmament,
> And down like the lightning's fiery shower
> Came King Fergus' force on King Sewyn's power."

The conflict was shortlived. The Moray men not only gained a complete victory, but by a sudden dash of the reserve party, they surrounded the staff of the enemy, carrying off the Danish leader, Prince Harold, to Lochindorbh Castle, where he was safely placed a prisoner of war within the dungeon keep. Gradually the invaders were all driven to their ships, and peace and prosperity once more began to settle down over the whole province.

Some time after this reverse of fortune had befallen the Throne of Denmark, King Sewyn sent a special envoy to the Celtic Court to arrange, if possible, a treaty of peace and endeavour to form a family alliance by means of an early marriage between the captured Prince and the young Malvina, King Fergus' only

daughter. In due time the proposal was communicated and favourably received at Lochindorbh.

> "The Sea Men were for peace, for peace,
> The Moray Men were not for war.
> Said the Chiefs, 'We'll wed our bairns together
> And burn and harry and kill no more.'"

The projected union proved highly popular on both sides of the sea. The whole of the nuptial preliminaries being amicably settled, all the arrangements appeared to be culminating towards a proper celebration thereof according to the custom of the period. Meanwhile the Prince and Princess, who knew nothing of the great interest which was being manifested on their behalf by the relative Powers, had become passionately enamoured of each other. Animated by an ardent attachment to the young Prince, the fair Malvina, aided by a sympathetic domestic, succeeded in carrying out a scheme for their secret escape, in view of a subsequent elopement to Denmark, in one of the Royal ships then cruising in the Moray Firth. On the evening previous to the day fixed by her father for the happy surprise and public ceremonies, the Prince and Princess very unfortunately contrived only a few hours in advance to make good their escape. Taking with them the King's favourite grey horse, they managed to cross the loch in one of the Castle boats, and land on the northern shore, without raising the least suspicion in the mind of any of the warders above the portals of the Stronghold. Early next morning her father cried,

> "Go, bring to me my daughter fair,
> And fetch me out young Harold here,
> And call the Priest to marry them fast
> Wi' feasts and dances and a' good cheer!"

Such a pleasant command produced no small stir among the inmates of the Castle. In vain did they search the whole place from dungeon to turret, but no bride or bridegroom was to be found. "For the Prince was gone and Malvina fair." Mounting together on horseback by the edge of the water, they had lost no time on their way through the great forest which then clothed

the district, till they reached the banks of the Findhorn near Dulsie. At this point, however, they found that all further progress, in that direction, was completely barred on account of the flooded state of the river. Taking refuge, it is said, for a brief space, in a small place of worship then existing on the Hill of the Doune, they soon discovered from the eastern terrace that the King, who had been apprised of the real state of matters by a sharp-eyed little page, was, with a mounted escort, in full pursuit. Hoping against hope, the ill-fated pair leapt on the back of the grey horse, and galloped down the hill side to the water's edge, where the "Speat on Findhorn drumlie rolled" in fearful torrents to its kindred sea. Here the sensible animal, unwilling to attempt the impossible, started back and snorted out his instinctive disapproval of their daring project. There was no help for it, however, and the prick from the Prince's dagger sealed their doom. A few minutes later, and the three were seen to be vainly struggling and plunging against the powerful currents of the swollen river. From the shore all hope of rescue by her father's party was out of the question—the grey steed "Sank wi' his burden in Findhorn's flood," and all was lost. A day or two after when the stream had partially subsided, the mortal remains of the two lovers were found lying in mutual embrace on the grassy holm a short way above the Mansion House.

> "And there did King Fergus and Sewyn weep,
> When they found them locked in death's cold shade,
> And Findhorn still lingers around their grave,
> And sighs for their fate with repentant wave."

By order of the Royal parents a grave was at once opened on the spot, and, that in death they should not be divided, the luckless couple were reverently laid side by side and carefully covered up in the "house appointed for all living."

In addition to the monolith previously referred to, a rude cairn of rough water-worn stones, carried apparently from the river bed, was raised over them and called by the old Highlanders

"Uaigh nan Lennan," or the "Cairn of the Lovers." Planted, no doubt by a sympathetic hand, some time during the last century, there stands a fine old birch tree on the one side, in memory let us suppose of the Princess, while a companion rowan, which grows on the other side, may have been intended as a fit representation of her gallant admirer, who remained her devoted friend to the last and voluntarily elected to risk, in her company, the sad consequences of their romantic scheme, rather than trust himself to the mercy of her angry father. Both trees are still fresh and vigorous, and are well fulfilling the object for which they were planted here.

"And they twa met and they twa plait,
And fain they wad be near,
That a' the world might ken right weel,
They were twa lovers dear."

Callum Beg was a notorious riever, or cattle stealer, who lived some centuries ago on the small croft at Straneorn on the right bank of the Findhorn, nearly opposite the farm house of Banchor in the parish of Ardclach. A few ruins on the edge of the haugh are said to mark the site of his rude homestead, and a short way up the adjoining cliff, the dark cave is still pointed out in which he used to secrete and preserve the meat of a stolen animal which it might be dangerous for him to store up in the usual way within the house. The whole surroundings are wild and precipitous in the extreme: just the kind of natural security one would expect a Highland freebooter might consider the most appropriate in which to take up his private abode. Here then lived Callum Beg, and in this lonely spot schemed those deeds of plunder and rapine which, in days long gone by, made his name not only a household word but a kind of terror over the whole district. From this Alpine retreat, therefore, he was in the habit, as occasion served, of sallying forth single-handed upon the farmers of the rich Lowlands, "lifting" a beast, and thereafter returning with all speed to the seclusion of his mountain corry

beyond the risk of immediate discovery. Short though he was in physical stature, yet he was a veritable giant in strength and endurance, being able to carry across his shoulders, and that too for a long distance, a load of booty sufficient to crush any ordinary man. Throughout the Streens, however, he was a great favourite, and was always spoken of among the residenters there, as "That honest man Callum Beg." Not unfrequently did he suit his own convenience, or carry out a practical joke at the expense of his neighbour, but for this he made it a point of honour, that every one of them should receive ample compensation for any temporary loss sustained through him, since it is said he never "killed a beast" without sharing it in the most liberal manner among the farmers and crofters all along the glen.

Born at a time when even the merest rudiments of an education were little thought of for the children of the poorer classes, Callum could neither read nor write. Nor did he ever come to see during the whole of his life that the neglect had resulted in any particular loss or inconvenience so far as he was concerned. Endowed with more than an average share of intellectual capacities, he set himself to study the slippery principles of "The plan, the simple plan, that they should take who had the power, and they should keep who can," in so far as he considered the adoption thereof to be capable of ministering to the immediate necessities of his own humble establishment. Cunning, shrewd, and venturesome, he was generally successful in his various exploits, and often managed to escape detection from the clever way in which he was able, in pressing circumstances, to disguise his booty and explain his conduct when suddenly called upon to account for the ownership of any doubted possession. His life policy was mainly actuated by a series of uncertain motives—self, falsehood, and deceit—incentives, however, which in those days were in nowise held to be in the least inconsistent with the character and profession of a "gentleman" of the period.

While quite a lad he was fortunate enough to be engaged as

one of the servants at Cawdor Castle, and discharged his various duties as herdsman with so marked ability and faithfulness that he soon attracted the attention, and gradually won for himself the life-long favour and friendship of his lord and master the Laird of Cawdor.

Early one Summer morning as Callum was busily employed looking after a fine herd of Highland cattle on the Home Farm, he was suddenly surprised by a strong band of fierce Cateranes from the hills, and made prisoner without much chance of escape. Losing no time, his beasts were all collected into a goodly sized drove. In the hope of defeating the least possibility of an immediate pursuit, the rievers placed Callum himself before them in the rear of the oxen, and started with the whole over the moor in the direction of the West Highlands. What, thought he, was to be done? The situation, to all appearance, was dark and cheerless in the extreme. After some little consideration, as he stepped gloomily behind his late charge, a happy idea flashed across his mind. He began secretly to cut off small pieces of his plaid and drop them when unobserved, one after another at short intervals on the ground in the same way that school-boys lay down "the scent" with scraps of paper for the guidance of "the dogs," when they are playing at "hounds and hares." On the following day, when everybody in and about the Castle was out searching the whole district, and wondering what could have become of Callum and his beasts, one of the men accidently picked up a small bit of tartan rag, which, after a little examination, was easily identified as part of Callum's well-known plaid. The artifice had proved entirely successful. The proper route was thereby plainly discovered and duly followed all the way up to the wilds of Strathdearn, where the unsuspecting freebooters were speedily overtaken in a secluded corry all seated, with their prisoner, round a large fire and feasting with great hilarity upon the roasted flesh of a prime bullock. After a severe struggle, in which the pursuers did not lose a single man,

the stolen cattle were collected and driven back by Callum and his friends to their former pastures at Cawdor Castle. On all hands it was freely admitted that Callum by his clever strategy had fully deserved the handsome present which was given to him by the Laird himself immediately after his return.

In course of time both his parents died in the Streens, and, as their only son, he naturally became tenant of Straneorn on the usual terms current in those days. Some time after settling on the old family homestead he married a young woman with whom he had formerly become acquainted in the lower district, and so fully did he manage to imbue her with his own principles and way of thinking that she turned out a most suitable helpmate, and in every respect a thoroughly sympathetic friend and adviser. They began life in their Highland home, as many others, similarly situated, have done, under the pressure of somewhat straitened circumstances, but in a few years Callum and his wife had considerably risen in the social scale, and stood well in the eyes of their neighbours who always spoke of the former to strangers as a man of sterling character and worth. At first, possessed of only one poor old white horse, he foresaw that it would be a serious matter for him, without additional help to lay down his first crop. Taking the situation, however, into his earnest consideration, in a few days he had made up his mind how he was to act. Secretly killing his own beast, he skinned it with great care and quietly buried the carcass. Next night he walked over to the stable at Banchor, and, waiting till he found that the whole family were fast asleep, removed the best brown horse. Returning with it soon after midnight, he and his wife immediately set about carrying his plan into effect, and so thoroughly disguised the animal, by sewing on the white hide with such skill and neatness, that Callum was enabled to work him day after day in the open field without anyone even suspecting the trick of which he had been guilty. Of course, the poor farmer was greatly annoyed and did all in his power to discover the perpetrator of such a bold deed, but all to

no purpose. After a time he had made up his mind to bear his loss and say nothing further about it. What then was Banchor's surprise one morning some six weeks afterwards, when he was about to turn out the rest of his horses to the hill grazings, to see his long lost horse standing as usual in his place, and none the worse for the friendly help he had just been affording to his canny neighbour on the opposite side of the river.

A few years after this, Callum bought an old garron at one of the Cawdor Trysts. On trial he found that he had not only made a worse bargain than he expected, as the beast was practically useless, but that the additional loss in "keep" before he could again be able to dispose of it at another market, would be to him something considerable. Fortune, however, favours the brave, and it so happened that his neighbour, the farmer of Dalbuie, stepped in about an evening or two after, and asked Callum to come over and help him to kill a fine "mairt" which he had been feeding for the Christmas. To this he readily gave his consent, and duly made his appearance at the time appointed. During the operation everyone present was praising the meat, and telling Dalbuie what a pleasure it would be in his family throughout the rest of the Winter months. All the time Callum himself had an eye upon the beef, and was secretly concocting a plan whereby he might secure it for his own table. That night he killed his old horse, removing all the distinctive parts so as to render it as like the dressed stirk as possible, and quietly exchanged the carcasses before morning. A few months afterwards, when both families had made good progress with their respective "mairts," Callum invited his neighbour one day to come over and take dinner with him. "Isn't that good beef, Dalbuie?" said he, as he placed a second supply on the good man's plate. "What like was yours compared with that?" "O, nothing like it," replied he; "Ye saw yourself how well it looked the day we killed it, but, O man, it was awfully teuch."

As the story goes, a somewhat penurious neighbour of his one

day asked Callum to come up to his house and kill a young pig for him, but as it was only a very small one, he added—"You know I could not, with such a small beastie, afford to give any of it away except a hind leg which I shall send down to yourself. What would you, therefore, advise me to do in order that none of the other folks about may be expecting me to part with a bit to each of them?" "Put the whole carcass," said Callum, "for the first night into the edge of the Findhorn in front of your own house. It will not only cool and firm the meat, but at the same time help to purify it from any traces of clotted blood which may remain, and you can just take a walk down to our house the following day, and say to my wife and anybody else you may care to tell in the Streens what you did, and assure them that the pig was stolen." Quite pleased with this plausible scheme, the poor man complied in every detail with the advice given him, with the result that next morning the carcass was nowhere to be found all along the river. Hastening down to Straneorn, he began to pour forth in doleful lamentations the news of the sad misfortune, but explain as best he could, he entirely failed to convince either Callum or his wife that his tale was other than the preconcerted repetition of the one he had undertaken the day before, to circulate among his neighbours so as to delude them and save his pork.

One year owing to a deficient corn crop, the poor people throughout the Streens found that their meal would be done a month or two before the next harvest. For months, not a peck was to be had in the mill of Drynachan, and Callum's girnel, too, was all but empty. Thinking over the matter for some time, he took his favourite Highland pony, a very sagacious animal, which had been in his possession for several years, spread a good bag saddlewise over its back and set out one afternoon for the mill of Moyness in Auldearn. On his arrival there, he purchased a boll of meal, but as it was rather far into the evening before he reached, the miller very considerately asked him to stay over

night, saying that he would be at liberty, after a good night's rest, to start as early as he thought proper on the following morning. To this proposal Callum very readily consented, and placing his bag of meal in a convenient situation in one of the out-houses, so as not to be under the necessity, as he said, of disturbing the miller previous to his usual time of rising, for the purpose of opening the mill door, he retired to rest in the "butt end" of the house, about an hour before the other members of the family went off to their beds. Towards midnight when he had satisfied himself that all the inmates were fast asleep, he went out to the stable, secured the meal on the back of his pony and thereafter tied the miller's best cow to its tail. Then attaching a large broom bush to the caudal appendage of the latter so as, more or less, to blear the footprints of both, he started the two beasts on their homeward journey to the Streens, and went quietly back to his bed. Next morning the animals were very quickly missed, and in consequence there was no small consternation among the domestics as to what had become of the stolen property. Callum, of course, was at once suspected, but when the miller found him sound asleep, in the room where he himself had left him the night before, that idea had to be entirely given up. Such a misfortune, however, to both parties, could not be concealed, and the news had to be broken. After hearing the full particulars, Callum appeared to be greatly distressed, and began to pour forth a sad lamentation over the great loss that such an unfortunate calamity would be to him. Then threatening to hold the miller responsible for the full value of his lost property, he left for the Streens, loudly expressing his deep regret that he had ever thought of buying his meal at the mill at Moyness.

There was in early times an old Celtic tenure by which the chief or lord of the tribe claimed entertainment, as circumstances might require, for himself and his followers in the house of his tenant for so many nights in the year. In accordance, mayhap,

with the relics of such a custom, we are told that the Thane of Cawdor was in the habit of putting up from time to time for a few days at Straneorn when on any of his fishing or hunting expeditions in the Streens. At all events, Callum was a special favourite and enjoyed the closest friendship of the Laird, who, although he had often undoubted cause for being greatly displeased with him on account of his reckless conduct, yet invariably overlooked his faults in the same way as an indulgent parent does those of a spoiled and wayward child. Just before setting out on one occasion with a band of followers for a week's fishing in the Streens, his Lordship was very much annoyed at the loss of a fine bullock which had suddenly disappeared from his herd at Cawdor Castle, and notwithstanding the most diligent search no one had been able to give the least account of the beast. In due course, however, he arrived at the Findhorn, and each day as he sat down to lunch with Callum, the Laird complimented him on the prime beef which he always found on his table, but usually finished up with a sad lamentation over the loss of his own "fine mairt." At last Callum could stand it no longer and broke out one day—"I'm sure your Lordship needna be aye making such a din about that bit stirkie, for I can assure you that by this time you have had your full share of the brute." "O you villain!" exclaimed the Laird, "I see it clearly now, but did I ever think of the trick that you have been playing upon me, but I'll not forget you my man for this." Callum had been dining the Laird and his servants from day to day upon the meat of his own well-fed bullock.

Relying on the continued forbearance of the Laird, Callum seldom scrupled to help himself at the expense of his master when an opportunity fit and safe presented itself. One day towards the end of November, he had come down to the Castle to pay his last half year's rent, but as the night had turned out rather rough and stormy his Lordship advised Callum to remain where he was, and said that for the time being he might have a share of the

grieve's bed. During the night when he found that that functionary had fallen fast asleep, Callum rose, went out to the byre and selected a nice fat quey, drove it four or five miles across the moor to the hill above Banchor, and was back in his bed again before his companion had wakened from his first sleep. Next morning as soon as the animal was missed all the servants about the square became very anxious to clear themselves from any imputations, and everyone seemed unanimous in the opinion that Callum must of necessity be the guilty man, but the grieve most effectually silenced all open insinuations by declaring that whoever the guilty person was, it could not be "that honest man Callum Beg," for he had not only been in his house all night but even slept in the same bed beside himself.

The following incident is related in the History of Nairnshire:—Callum, we are told, attended all the local trysts with great regularity, but his movements were invariably watched on these occasions with some degree of anxiety by the farmers from the "Laigh" of Moray and Nairn. One day he turned up as usual at a Forres market, and, while taking a round or two among the cattle, espied a nice little cow which he believed would suit his purpose very well. To "lift" her, he concluded there would be little or no difficulty, but from one marked peculiarity, he was afraid to do so, for fear of an easy detection. The fact was, the beast had no tail. After some little reflection, Callum felt himself once again able to meet the circumstances of the case. Keeping an eye on her till the darkness had set in, he very cunningly removed the tail from another animal, and during the night attached it with great neatness to the end of the stump. Next morning Callum was seen driving his booty in broad daylight along the high road between Forres and Nairn. At Findhorn Bridge, however, he was overtaken by the owner, who accosted him in somewhat angry tones. "Stop, thief!" cried he; "that's my beast that you have got." "How do you make that out, goodman?" said Callum. "Because she is like her in every

way," replied the crofter, becoming heated with rage. "That may be, but you know 'that like a thing was never a thing'," ejaculated Callum; then pointing with his stick to the beast before him, added, "and besides, do you mean to tell me that your cow had a tail like that?" The poor man was completely taken aback, for he could not say that she had. Taking advantage of his sudden confusion, Callum feigned to consider the matter as a personal insult, and gave him a little bit of his mind on the subject. As soon as possible, however, he endeavoured to terminate the interview by advising his accuser to be more careful in future before he ventured to blame an honest man for having stolen any of his beasts. Then turning on his heel, he immediately drove off in triumph, feeling sure that he had now little or no serious danger to encounter during the rest of his way home to the Streens.

In the "Highland Note Book," Dr Carruthers relates a good story of Callum Beg. Being a dependent and great favourite, the Laird of Cawdor often interfered on behalf of his wayward retainer in connection with his forays on the neighbouring estates. On day Callum, having stolen a good fat sheep, was brought with it in his possession to appear before the Laird as his feudal superior and judge. Having a special regard for him, the Laird did not well know how to act. After thinking over the matter for a short time, he ordered the culprit and the sheep to be put into the "donjon keep" of the castle, at the same time giving directions that his accusers should be amply regaled on bread and ale. During the time they were thus engaged, the Laird slipt out and enquired of Callum if he had a good knife. Being answered in the affirmative —"Then," said he, "I shall send you customers for your wedder." Callum immediately took the hint and killed the sheep. He cut it into small morsels, and threw the whole out through the apertures, constructed in the dungeon wall rather for air than light, into the front court where there was a pack of hounds by whom the sheep was speedily devoured. Time having been

allowed for the accomplishment of this feat, the Laird took his chair of state and summoned that "obdurate thief," Callum Beg, into his presence, together with the stolen property and the witnesses. The iron door of the cell was forthwith opened, and the clansman produced, but not a vestige of the sheep could be found. Upon this statement the justice spake, charging the witnesses with conspiring against that honest man, Callum Beg, and accordingly set the prisoner free! Callum, however, was not always so fortunate.

On another occasion he fell into the hands of the Laird of Kilraak, and was committed to durance vile. His own chief, the Thane of Cawdor, hearing of the jeopardy in which Callum was placed, repaired to the mansion of his friend on the first day of the new year, and seated himself on the great stair in front of the castle. In due course Kilraak himself made his appearance, and the usual greetings having passed, he invited his neighbour, the Laird of Cawdor, into the hall, but he replied that he had a new year's gift to ask, and unless it were granted he would not enter the Castle, or even partake of his proffered hospitality. "I shall grant you every favour in my power," replied Kilraak, "but the life of Callum Beg." "That," rejoined the other, "is the very request I came to make, and since it has been denied, it is unnecessary for me to stay any longer." The Laird accordingly departed, and the culprit was—hanged. Some years ago, a skeleton was dug up in the district with a rope round its neck, and the country people felt certain that it was none other than the veritable remains of Callum Beg.

Such are some of the Stories and Legends of our Highland Parish.

APPENDIX.

List of Plants found in the Parish of Ardclach.

MUSHROOMS—Fungi.

Edible Fungi.

Agaricus rubescens—Ruddy Warty Caps. Under trees.

Agaricus campestris—Common Mushroom. Not in woods.

Marasmius oreades—Fairy Ring Champignon.

Agaricus arvensis—Horse Mushroom.

Agaricus orcella—Sweetbread Mushroom.

Boletus edulis—Edible Boletus.

Hygrophorus pratensis—Buff Caps. A very beautiful species.

Poisonous Fungi.

Agaricus muscarius—Fly Mushroom.

Agaricus semilanceatus—Liberty Caps. Often amongst grass.

Agaricus semiglobatus—Dung Slimy Caps.

Agaricus fascicularis—Clustered Yellow Mushroom.

Agaricus æruginosus—Green Slimy Caps.

Coprinus picaceus—Magpie Mushroom. Nowhere common. In September, 1888, we found a number of very fine specimens in a disused gravel pit in the wood near Whitemire farm house, Darnaway.

Agaricus fastibilis—Sham Mushroom.

Russula emetica—Emetic Russule.

Boletus luridus—Lurid Boletus.

MOSSES—Musci.

Sphagnum cymbifolium—Blunt-leaved Bog Moss. Abundant.

Sphagnum acutifolium—Slender Bog Moss. Plentiful in mossy pools.

Sphaguum subsecundum. In 1893 we discovered this rare moss in a still pool on the Aitnoch Moor. The stems are sometimes nearly two feet long. The three species grow in water, and may be readily known by their pale colour, sometimes almost white.

Anœctangium ciliatum—Hoary-branched Beardless Moss. On an ice carried boulder, Grantown road, near the 12th milestone.

Grimmia pulvinata—Grey-cushioned Grimmia. This beautiful evergreen moss is frequent on wall-tops and rocks.

Didymodon purpureus—Purple Didymodon. It is native over the whole earth.

Trichostomum lanuginosum—Woolly Fringe Moss. On the lofty mountains it sometimes forms a soft grey carpet many acres in extent. Lynemore, June, 1892.

Trichostomum heterostichum—Serrated Hoary Fringe Moss. On a granite boulder near Ferness.

Trichostomum aciculare—Dark Mountain Fringe Moss. Ferness Falls.

Dicranum bryoides—The Lesser Pinnate-leaved Fork Moss. This is the little moss which cheered Mungo Park in his hour of difficulty and despair on the banks of the Niger. A small but variable species.

Dicranum glaucum—White Fork Moss. Aitnoch Moor, April, 1893.

Dicranum squarrosum—Drooping-leaved Fork Moss. Often near a clear fountain.

Dicranum pellucidum—Pellucid Fork Moss. Burn and river banks.

Dicranum scoparium—Broom Fork Moss. Generally distributed over the globe.

Dicranum heteromallum—Silky-leaved Fork Moss. Shady sandy banks.

Polytrichum piliferum—Bristle-pointed Hair Moss. Heathy soil.

Polytrichum Juniperinum—Juniper-leaved Hair Moss. Generally without leaves at the base of the stem.

Polytrichum commune—Common Hair Moss. One of the giants of the tribe. In size it varies from six to twelve inches.

Polytrichum Alpinum—Alpine Hair Moss.

Polytrichum urnigerum—Urn-bearing Hair Moss. In age the leaves assume a reddish tinge.

Polytrichum aloides—Dwarf Long-headed Hair Moss. Moist sandy banks.

Orthotrichum leiocarpum—Smooth-fruited Bristle Moss. Oak trees.

Orthotrichum crispum—Curled Bristle Moss. Oak stems; rare on stones.

Bryum ligulatum—Long-leaved Thyme Thread Moss. In woods and on moist banks. "Pulchrae gentis pulcherrima." Common.

Bryum punctatum—Dotted Thyme Thread Moss. The foliage varies much.

Bryum hornum—Swan's-neck Thyme Thread Moss. A showy species.

Bartramia pomiformis—Common Apple Moss. An elegant moss.

Bartramia fontana—Fountain Apple Moss. Found perfect about midsummer, near springs in a turfy soil.

Bartramia arcuata—Curve-stalked Apple Moss.

Fontinalis antipyretica—Greater Water Moss. On stones under running water.

Hypnum undulatum—Waved Feather Moss. There is a very beautiful pinnate variety in Ferness Wood.

Hypnum denticulatum—Sharp Fern-like Feather Moss.

Hypnum purum—Neat Meadow Feather Moss. On Banks and under trees.

Hypnum Schreberi—Schreberian Feather Moss. Rare in Fruit.

Hypnum alopecurum—Fox-tail Feather Moss. Ferness Falls.

Hypnum dendroides—Tree-like Feather Moss. A very graceful species.

Hypnum splendens—Glittering Feather Moss. Stems glossy.

Hypnum proliferum—Proliferous Feather Moss. Woods and banks.

Hypnum rutabulum—Common Rough-stalked Feather Moss. Common.

Hypnum cuspidatum—Pointed Bog Feather Moss.

Hypnum loreum—Rambling Mountain Feather Moss. Ferness Falls.

Hypnum triquetrum—Triquetrous Feather Moss.

Hypnum cupressiforme—Cypress-leaved Feather Moss.

Hypnum Crista-castrensis—Ostrich-plume Feather Moss. This is the most elegant of all the Hypna, and a prize for the southern Muscologist.

JUNGERMANNIACEÆ.

Jungermannia asplenioides. Frequent on damp mossy stones.

HEPATICÆ.

Marchantia polymorpha.

LICHENES.

Cladonia pyxidata—Fairy Cups.

Cladonia rangiferina—Reindeer Moss. Heathy moors.

Usnea barbata—Jupiter's Beard or Tree Hair.

Parmelia parietina—Yellow Lichen.

Carnicularia Jubata.

Ramalina calicaris.

Ramalina farinacea—Narrow Meally Ramalina.

Sticta pulmonacea. On trunks of trees.

LYCOPODIACEÆ—The Club-Moss Family.

Lycopodium clavatum—Common Club-Moss. "Tod's tails."

Lycopodium annotinum—The Interrupted Club-Moss. Rare. Found one specimen on the summit of Ben Wyvis in September, 1876.

Lycopodium Alpinum—Alpine Club-Moss. Occasional, Carn Glass.

Lycopodium Selago—Fir Club-Moss. Frequent on the higher heaths, Carn Glass.

EQUISETACEÆ—The Horsetail Family.

Equisetum arvense—Field Horsetail. On damp meadows and similar places. The fertile frond comes up in April and May; the barren fronds afterwards, from a different part of the same root.

Equisetum sylvaticum—Wood Horsetail. Branches compound, usually deflexed. In shady wet places.

Equisetum limosum—Smooth Naked Horsetail. Commonly found in stagnant water. The branched variety is Equisetum fluviatile. This is the "Paddocks' Pipes" of Moray and Nairn.

Equisetum palustre—Marsh Horsetail. Airdrie Mills. Tomnarroch Burn.

FILICES—The Fern Family.

Polypodieæ.

Polypodium vulgare—The Common Polypody. The fructification is so conspicuous that popularly it is said to bear flowers on the back of its fronds. Grows on old walls, stumps and roots of trees.

Polypodium Phegopteris—Mountain Polypodium or Beech Fern. There are a few patches here and there along the Findhorn.

Polypodium Dryopteris—The Three-branched Polypody or Oak Fern. Frequent in shady wet places. This is a very handsome species.

Aspidieæ.

Lastrea Filix-mas—Male Fern. Common about hedges and ditches.

Lastrea dilatata—Broad Prickly-toothed Fern. Common, and will grow in almost any soil. A very variable species.

Lastrea Oreopteris—Mountain Male Fern. The spore cases are marginal and the under side of the fronds is furnished with numerous yellow glands which are distinctly fragrant when bruised. Frequent on open heaths in the Findhorn valley.

Polystichum aculeatum—Prickly Shield Fern. This fern is almost an evergreen and occurs sparingly among the rocks along the river.

Polystichum lobatum var. B. Occasional on the Findhorn.

Polystichum angulare—Soft Prickly Shield Fern. Not common. The botanist alone is able to distinguish aculeatum from angulare.

Polystichum Lonchitis—Alpine Shield or Holly Fern. Found on the Findhorn by the late Rev. Dr Gordon and W. A. Stables, but all the roots have long since been removed to private gardens.

Cystopteris fragilis—Brittle Bladder Fern. Occasional in Nairnshire. Grows luxuriantly in one damp spot on the rocks below Daltra, There are one or two specimens on the masonry of Dulsie Bridge over the pool.

Cystopteris dentata, var. B. One specimen, found on the Findhorn.

ASPLENIEÆ.

Athyrium Filix-fœmina—Drooping Lady Fern. "Queen of the Ferns."

Asplenium Adiantum nigrum—Black Spleenwort. One locality on the river below Daltra. Varies greatly in the size of frond.

Asplenium Trichomanes—Common Spleenwort. Frequent on shady rocks and abundant on the old walls of Lochindorbh Castle.

Asplenium viride—Green Spleenwort. Grows in the damp crannies near the Alt n àiridh and Lynemore Falls.

PTERIDEÆ.

Pteris aquilina—Common Bracken. The largest, commonest, and most handsome of the British ferns.

BLECHNEÆ.

Blechnum spicant vel boreale—Hard Fern. Produces two distinct kinds of frond—fertile and barren. Common.

OPHIOGLOSSACEÆ.

Botrychium Lunaria—Moonwort. This is a famous plant in legendary lore. Frequent on the dry moors. Bell-tower hill.

GRAMINEÆ—THE GRASS FAMILY.

PHALARIDEÆ—THE PHALARIS TRIBE.

Phalaris arundinacea—Reed Canary Grass. On the margin of the Loch of Belivat. It is a very ornamental grass. The striped leaved Canary Grass is common in gardens but does not occur wild in Nairnshire.

Anthoxanthum odoratum—Sweet-scented Vernal Grass. Not very nutritive, but esteemed for its smell which causes much of the fragrance peculiar to newly mown meadow hay.

Phleum pratense—Meadow Timothy Grass. Occurs in pastures and grassy places.

Phleum bulbosum var. The stem at the base is changed into a fleshy bulb-like swelling.

Alopecurus pratensis—Meadow Fox-tail Grass. Early and leafy, it is esteemed a valuable grass.

AGROSTIDEÆ—THE AGROSTIS TRIBE.

Agrostis vulgaris—Common Bent Grass. The opposite branches diverge even after flowering. A very common viatical plant. Abundant round the borders of fields and other grassy places.

Arrhenatherum avenaceum—Oat-like Grass. Its presence is an indication of comparatively poor soil.

Arrhenatherum bulbosum, B var. Farmers think it only too plentiful here. In dry fields. The bulbs in Scotland are called Swine's Arnuts, but locally known as Knot Grass.

Holcus lanatus—Meadow Soft Grass. Leaves hairy or downy on both sides. It often forms a considerable part of the hay crop, and is sometimes called Pluff Grass.

Holcus mollis—Creeping Soft Grass. Roots widely creeping. This grass rather avoids cultivation. Woods and pastures. The roots are useful for binding dry sandy embankments.

Melica nutans—Mountain Melic Grass. At the foot of the Bell Tower knoll, near the water's edge. The lax brownish bead-like spiklets are sure to attract attention. Rare in this parish.

AVENEÆ—The Oat Grass Tribe.

Koeleria cristata—Crested Hair Grass. Stems slender, from six to eight inches. On dry pastures. Frequent.

Avena strigosa—Bristle-pointed Oat. Occasionally found growing wild among the cereals, but never encouraged. "Havers."

Avena caryophyllea—Silver Hair Grass. A low plant. Six to eight inches high. Pretty common on dry sandy fields. "Mouse Grass."

Avena præcox—Early Hair Grass. Two to six inches high. The panicle compact, with short erect branches. Frequent.

Aira cæspitosa—Turfy Hair Grass. This is a splendid plant with stems from two to four feet in height. The root leaves usually form large hemispherical tufts. The variety Aira Alpina would appear to be produced by the peculiar atmospheric and geographical influences of the situations where it occurs. Dwarfed specimens have been found at an elevation of 4000 feet from the sea level.

Aira flexuosa—Wavy Hair Grass. It occurs very frequently on all the local moors, and usually attracts attention as a tall slender grass. From the short almost capillary leaves, it might be suitable for lawns.

FESTUCEÆ—The Festuca Tribe.

Poa annua—Annual Meadow Grass. In Britain this grass is all but universal. It follows man in all his migrations and may be found in flower or seed during the greater part of the year. It climbs the mountain to a height of 3300 feet.

Poa trivialis—Roughish Meadow Grass.

Poa pratensis—Smooth-stalked Meadow Grass. The short truncate ligule, on the upper sheath, is the best character to distinguish this plant from the preceding.

Glyceria fluitans—Floating Sweet Grass. In stagnant and running water.

Molinia cærulea—Heath Purple Melic Grass. The sheath of the lower leaf covers the knots which are all very low on the stem.

Cynosurus cristatus—Crested Dog's Tail Grass. The panicle close, with the tiny branchlets on one side.

Dactylis glomerata—Rough Cock's-foot Grass. It is quite common by the borders of fields and waste places, growing and flowering almost the whole summer. Striking its roots to a considerable depth, it stands drought well, and is sometimes cultivated in Ardclach.

Festuca bromoides—Barren Fescue Grass.

Festuca ovina—Sheep's Fescue Grass. According to Linnæus, sheep have little relish for hills on which this grass is not rather plentiful.

Festuca vivipara, var. c. The spikelet converted into a bud. Common after an elevation of 800 feet in Ardclach. In this form the spikelet is converted into a bud.

Festuca duriuscula, var. d.—Hard Fescue Grass. Withstands dry weather better than most grasses, and helps to form good pasturage.

Festuca rubra—Creeping Fescue Grass. A rich cropper but not very nutrituous.

Festuca sylvatica—Wood Fescue Grass. We found a few specimens in the New Inn (Balinriach) Fir Wood at Glenferness.

Bromus mollis—Soft Brome Grass. Locally known as "Goose Grass."

Brachypodium sylvaticum—Slender False Brome Grass. This genus is distinguished from Wheat (Triticum) by the unequal glumes.

TRITICEÆ—The Triticum Tribe.

Lolium perenne—Common Rye Grass. Sometimes the axis is shortened, and the spikelets approach so as to form a broad two-rowed spike. This species is one of the most valued grasses by the farmer.

Triticum repens—Creeping Wheat Grass. Locally called "Quickens, or Couch Grass." If the smallest portion containing a joint be left in the soil, it sends up a fresh bud; hence the great difficulty which the farmer experiences in getting rid of so troublesome an indweller.

NARDEÆ—The Mat Grass Tribe.

Nardus stricta—Common Mat Grass. The leaves and stems remain through the Winter and perish only during the succeeding Spring and Summer. It occurs plentifully on barren heaths and moors.

CYPERACEÆ—The Sedge Family.

CARICEÆ—The Carex Tribe.

(These plants are remarkable for the very sharp corners of the stems, and also for the cutting edges of the leaves).

Carex pulicaris—Flea Carex.

Carex incurva—Curved Carex. Plentiful on the Links at Nairn. Found one specimen on the moor near the old Schoolhouse.

Carex paniculata—Great Panicled Carex.

Carex stellulata—Little Prickly Carex. Boggy meadows. Pretty little plant.

Carex curta—White Carex. Rare over the country but rather common in Ardclach. Occurs in old ditches among sluggish water.

Carex alpicola, var. B. Rare. Found a few plants on the Findhorn.

Carex vulgaris—Tufted Bog Carex. Common.

Carex panicea—Pink-leaved Carex.

Carex sylvatica—Pendulous Wood Carex. Ferness Fir Wood.

Carex flava—Yellow Carex.

Carex binervis—Green-ribbed Carex.

Carex pilulifera—Round headed Carex.

Carex ampullacea—Slender-beaked Bottle Carex. This is a very common plant in almost every loch and permanent pool in Ardclach.

SCIRPEÆ—The Scirpus Tribe.

Heleocharis palustris—Creeping Spike Rush. Loch of Belivat.

Heleocharis multicaulis—Many-stalked Spike Rush. Common.

Scirpus cæspitosus—Scaly-stalked Club Rush.

Scirpus fluitans—Floating Club Rush. Frequent in shallow pools among stagnant or sluggish water.

Scirpus setaceus—Bristle-stalked Club Rush. Muddy habitats.

Eriophorum vaginatum—Hare's-tail Cotton Grass. Said to help largely in fattening sheep and black game.

Eriophorum angustifolium—Common Cotton Grass. The white tails produce a very pretty effect on many of the peaty bogs within the parish.

JUNCACEÆ—The Rush Family.

Juncus effusus—Soft Rush.

Juncus conglomeratus—Common Rush. These two species are very similar to each other. This family loves boggy situations in the colder regions of the world, and are often troublesome weeds to the farmer. They grow best on rich cold soil. Both plants are locally known as "Rashes."

Juncus Balticus—Baltic Rush. Plentiful at the Levrattich bend of the river Findhorn, which is the farthest inland station in Nairnshire.

Juncus squarrosus—Moss Rush-goose Corn. Common on the light mossy heaths, forming dense rough tufts.

Juncus bufonius—Toad Rush. Common in shallow ditches.

Juncus obtusiflorus—Blunt-flowered Jointed Rush. Sowerby says:—"It is found in ditches and wet places. Rather rare. Sparingly distributed over England; very scarce in Scotland, but I have never seen a Scottish specimen." In July, 1887, I discovered a few plants at the Levrattich bend of the river. One good specimen was taken for my Herbarium and several left to continue the race. This is the only station I know of in the North. It has now disappeared from its old habitat.

Juncus acutiflorus—Sharp-flowered Jointed Rush.

Juncus lamprocarpus—Shining-fruited Jointed Rush.

Juncus supinus—Whorl-headed Rush.

Juncus tenuis vel gesneri—Spreading Rush.

Luzula pilosa—Broad-leaved Hairy Wood Rush.

Luzula sylvatica—Great Wood Rush. A very ornamental plant along the banks of all the local watercourses among trees.

Luzula campestris—Field Wood Rush. Dry pastures. Frequent.

Luzula multiflora—Many-flowered Wood Rush. Moist turfy soil. Common.

Luzula congesta, var. b. Clusters in a compact lobed head. Plentiful.

TYPHACEÆ—The Bull Rush Family.

Sparganium ramosum—Branched Bur-Reed. Black Burn at Littlemill. The round stems, soft leaves, and globular prickly heads of fruit well distinguish this genus.

LEMNACEÆ—The Duck-Weed Family.

Lemna minor—Lesser Duck-weed. An inhabitant of stagnant pools, often covering the entire surface.

POTAMACEÆ—The Pond-Weed Family.

Potamógeton natans—Broad-leaved Pond-weed.

Potamógeton oblonga—Oblong-leaved Pond-weed. Small streams and ponds.

JUNCAGINACEÆ—The Arrow Grass Family.

Triglóchin palustre—Marsh Arrow Grass. The straight stems, root leaves, floral spikes, and the angular fruit opening at the base, showing the triangular seed, should be enough to settle this species. In boggy places, but not very abundant in Ardclach.

ALISMACEÆ—The Water Plantain Family.

Alisma plantago—Greater Water Plantain. Bog of Fornighty.

LILIACEÆ—The Lily Family.

Hyacintheæ.

Agraphis nutans—Wood Hyacinth. Rare in Ardclach.

Narthecium ossifragum—Bog Asphodel. This species has sword-shaped leaves and bright yellow flowers. Turfy bogs.

ORCHIDACEÆ—The Orchis Family.

Orchis mascula—Early Purple Orchis. On damp pastures.

Orchis maculata—Spotted-leaved Orchis. Common. Known in bygone days as the "Witch Flower," from the udder and teat-like appearance of the double bulbous root. Through this organ the "wise women," versed in the Black Art were believed to draw whatever milk they required from their neighbours' cows.

Orchis latifolia—Broad-leaved Meadow Orchis.

Gymnadenia conopsea—Fragrant-scented Orchis.

Gymnadenia albida—White Fragrant-scented Orchis. The odour of the flowers is very agreeable.

Habenaria bifolia—Two-leaved Orchis. Occasional, Ferness, Achagour, on the dry moor.

Neottieæ.

Goodyera repens—Creeping Goodyera. Common in the Dulsie and Glenferness fir woods, but a rare plant over Scotland.

Listera ovata—Common Twayblade. Greenish flowers. Occurs in the New Inn (Balinreach) fir wood.

AMARYLLIDACEÆ—The Narcissus Family.

Galanthus nivalis—Common Snowdrop. Though originally an alien in Britain, this plant is now well established in the Castle Folly wood near Lethen House, and other parts. It is readily known by its solitary white pendulous flower, sometimes even peeping through the snow.

Narcissus Pseudo-narcissus—Daffodil. Lent Lily. Distinguished by the yellow flowers growing upon a scape. Here it is chiefly confined to cultivation, and only apparently wild about former homesteads.

IRIDACEÆ—The Iris Family.

Iris Pseud-acorus—Flag Water Iris, or Fleur-de-lis. Rare, if not even extinct in this parish.

DICOTYLEDONS.

CONIFERÆ—The Pine Family.

Abietineæ—The Fir, Pine, Spruce, and Larch Tribe.

Pinus sylvestris—Scotch Pine or Fir. This is the most hardy and valuable of all the pines. A few specimens of the ancient Scotch forests are still to be found in the ravines along the Findhorn.

Pinus pinaster—Pinaster or Clustered Pine. A noble species Introduced to Glenferness from the sandy plains of Southern Europe.

Abies excelsa—Norway Spruce Fir. When growing singly in rich soil, apart from other trees, it forms one of the most beautiful objects that can be imagined, with its long drooping branches almost touching the ground.

Abies Douglasii—The Douglas Fir. This is a gigantic tree and produces a heavy firm timber, not in the least liable to warp. It is an evergreen of very rapid growth. On the river near the church.

Picea pectinata—Silver Fir. Introduced.

Larix Europœa—Larch. In this district it grows well and is a very profitable tree—being liable to few accidents and transplants with little risk.

Cupressineæ.

Juniperus communis—Juniper. Like other Coniferæ, the fruit is a cone, composed of scales collected in a spiral form round a common axis. In medicine they are known as berries, though in the polite language of the botanist they are termed Galbuli. Locally they are spoken of as " Aitnach or Melmot berries."

Taxineæ.

Taxus baccata—Common Yew. Planted as an ornamental tree. The fruit is only popularly supposed to be poisonous, though the leaves are certainly very dangerous. It lives to a great age.

SALICACEÆ—The Willows or Catkin-Bearing Families.

(The most Northern woody plant at present known is the Salix arctica.)

Salix alba—Common White Willow.

Salix purpurea—Bitter Purple Willow.

Salix viminalis—Common Osier.

Salix cinerea—Grey Willow.

Salix caprea—Round-leaved Willow.

Salix repens—Creeping Willow. Levrattich, Lynemore.

Populus tremula—Aspen. Quaking Ash. The trembling leaves have always attracted attention and have often been the objects of superstitious belief and poetical allusion.

Populus nigra—Black Poplar. It loves a damp habitat.

CORYLACEÆ—The Nut Tree, or Hazel Family.

Fagus sylvatica—Wood, or Common Beech. The foliage is so dense that other plants do not thrive under it. The fruit is called Beech-mast, and contains a nut or seed which when ripe often falls out, leaving the husk upon the tree.

Castanea vulgaris—Spanish Chestnut.

Quercus pedunculata—Oak. This tree has the reputation of being the true British Oak whose wood is so frequently used for naval purposes.

Corylus avellana—Hazel. It climbs well nigh to the summit of our loftiest mountains.

ÆSCULACEÆ.

Æsculus Hippocastanum—Horse Chestnut. There are no very old specimens in this country as it was only introduced about 1683.

BETULACEÆ—The Birch Family.

Betula alba—Common Birch. It thrives in poor sandy soil. The finest Weeping Birches in Britain stand on the Findhorn near Forres.

Alnus glutinosa—Common Alder. Its favourite situation is beside streams, and locally known as "Arns."

MYRICACEÆ—The Gale Family.

Myrica Gale—Gale. Bog Myrtle. The fruit is covered with resinous glands and the leaves are pleasantly fragrant when bruised.

EMPETRACEÆ—The Crowberry Family.

Empetrum nigrum—Crowberry. The "Croupans" of Nairnshire.

EUPHORBIACEA—The Spurge Family.

Euphorbia Helioscopia—Sun Spurge. A poisonous principle resides chiefly in its milky secretion.

URTICACEÆ—The Nettle Family.

Urtica urens—Annual Stinging Nettle.

Urtica dioica—Perennial Stinging Nettle. The young sprouts of this plant were often eaten in Spring by the peasantry in Scotland.

ULMACEÆ—The Elm Family.

Ulmus campestris—Common Elm. Introduced.

Ulmus montana—Broad-leaved Elm. The Wych or Scotch Elm. The seeds of the elm do not produce plants exactly like their parents.

POLYGONACEÆ—The Buckwheat Family.

(Distinguished by its scarious stipules and crustaceous fruit) inclosed by the calyx.)

Polygonum amphibium—Amphibious Persicaria or Bistort. It is a very showy plant but difficult to eradicate from reclaimed marshy lands where it has once got a firm hold.

Polygonum viviparum—Alpine Bistort. Generally scarce but frequent here.

Polygonum Persicaria—Spotted Persicaria. The Legend informs us that this plant was one of those which flourished on Mount Calvary, and that the dark spot in the centre of the leaf is a permanent stain caused by the sacred blood which dropped upon it during the Crucifixion.

Polygonum aviculare—Common Knot-Grass. The numerous seeds supply abundant food for small birds during Winter.

Polygonum latifolium—Sub var. Leaves much larger than in the typical form.

Polygonum convolvulus—Black Bindweed. Cornfields and gardens.

Rumex obtusifolius—Blunt-leaved Dock. "Dockens."

Rumex crispus—Curled Dock. "Dockens."

Rumex acetosa—Common Sorrel. "Souracks." A gregarious plant often tinging a dry field with a dark red colour.

Rumex acetosella—Sheep's Sorrel. "Souracks."

CHENOPODIACEÆ—The Goose-foot Family.

Chenopodium album—White Goose-foot. Locally "Melgs."

Atriplex patula—Spreading Orache.

Atriplex angustifolia—Narrow-leaved Orache. Both species are weeds, and sometimes great pests in gardens and cornfields.

CALLITRICHACEÆ—The Water-Starwort Family.

Callitriche verna—Vernal Water-Starwort.

Callitriche Autumnalis—Autumnal Water-Starwort. Very rare. I discovered this plant in the Coulmony Burn, 3rd November, 1894.

HIPPURIDACEÆ—The Mare's-tail Family.

Hippuris vulgaris—Mare's-tail. It grows plentifully in several mooral pools within the parish.

PLANTAGINACEÆ—The Plantain Family.

Plantago major—Greater Plantain. The "Warba Blades" of Nairn and Moray. It has a tendency to spring up wherever man decides to plant his abode, and "the more it is trodden on the better it grows." In some of our colonies it is known to the natives as the "Englishman's Foot."

Plantago lanceolata—Rib Grass. Locally "Carle Doddies."

Plantago maritima—Sea Plantain. This species grows plentifully on the sea shores and sparingly on the higher mountains. Belivat and Cairn of Achagour.

Littorella lacustris—Common Shore-weed. Margin of the Loch of Belivat under the shallow water.

PRIMULACEÆ—The Primrose Family.

Primula veris—Cowslip. Found one specimen apparently wild near Moss-Side.

Primula vulgaris—Common Primrose. This is a great favourite and one of the earliest Spring flowers Abundant on the river banks.

Lysimachia nemorum—Wood Loosestrife. Findhorn. Occasional.

Trientalis europæa—European Chickweed Winter Green. The slender grace of the whole plant is extreme—a special beauty, a real fairy. Abundant on the dry moors. Generally rare over Scotland.

LENTIBULACEÆ—The Butterwort Family.

Pinguicula vulgaris—Common Butterwort. "Sheep rot." The name is derived from the sticky nature of the foliage. If the juice be mixed with milk it acts like rennet and produces curd.

LABIATÆ—The Labiate Family.

Mentha arvensis—Field Mint. Often a troublesome weed.

Thymus Serpyllum—Wild Thyme. The whole plant has an agreeable odour.

Nepeta cataria—Catmint. Cultivated.

Glechoma hederaceæ—Ground Ivy. Locally "Grundavy." This is the Forget-me-not of the early botanists, because it "Left an evil taste in the mouth, not soon removed."

Lamium amplexicaule—Henbit. A common garden weed.

Lamium purpureum—Red Henbit. Formerly used in medicine.

Galeopsis Tetrahit—Common Hemp Nettle. The "Dai Nettle" of Moray.

Stachys sylvatica—Hedge Woundwort. This herb is pungent, and has a disagreeable smell. Inhabits shady places.

Stachys palustris—Marsh Woundwort. It is no friend to the farmer as it increases very rapidly and exhausts the soil. This is known as the "Hound's Tongue" in Moray and Nairn.

Marrubium vulgare—Common Horehound. Chiefly in gardens. In pulmonary ailments, it enjoys great favour, as a popular remedy.

Prunella vulgaris—All-heal. Its ancient repute is now reduced to a mere name. Pastures and grassy places.

Ajuga reptans—Common Bugle.

Teucrium Scorodonia—Wood Sage. The smell and taste of this plant resemble very much that of hops. "How can a man die, who has sage in his garden?"

SCROPHULARIACEÆ—The Fig-wort Family.

Veronica hederifolia—Ivy-leaved Speedwell. Occasional.

Veronica agrestis—Procumbent Speedwell. Fields and gardens.

Veronica arvensis—Wall Speedwell. A common weed.

Veronica officinalis—Common Speedwell. Heaths and woods. An old Danish botanist tried to show that this wildling was exactly the same as the Tea-Plant of China, and it was, at one time, frequently tried as a substitute.

Veronica Chamædrys—Germander Speedwell.

Veronica Beccabunga—Brooklime. Occurs in every country in Europe

Scrophularia nodosa—Knobby-rooted Figwort. Slightly poisonous.

Digitalis purpurea—Purple Fox-glove. The "Dead man's bells.' Has a powerful influence on the system, and a valuable remedy in many diseases.

Pedicularis sylvatica—Common Lousewort. In moist heathy places.

Pedicularis palustris—Marsh Lousewort. The Flower is large and crimson, varying to white.

Rhinanthus Crista-galli—Common Yellow Meadow Rattle.

Melampyrum pratense—Meadow-wheat. The large solitary seeds, resembling grains of wheat, distinguish the genus.

Euphrasia officinalis—Common Eyebright. This plant is peculiarly liable to variation—scarcely a character permanent except the pubescence of the corolla. It objects to submit to cultivation.

SOLANACEÆ—The Nightshade Family.

Solanum Dulcamara—Woody Nightshade. The specific name refers to the curious change in taste which takes place when a portion of the stem is chewed—first sweet, then bitter. It is frequent in the lower district but rare in the heights. The fruit is known as the "Mad Dog's Berries."

BORAGINACEÆ—The Borage Family.

Anchusa sempervirens—Evergreen Alkanet. Generally rare, but thrives well at Coulmony House.

Lycopsis arvensis—Ox-tongue. The flowers are small, and purple before opening; afterwards sky blue. The whole plant is hispid, with strong hairs, each rising from a scaly tubercle.

Myosotis palustris—Forget-me-not This is a beautiful plant and has, for long, been regarded as an emblem of true affection.

Myosotis intermedia—Intermediate Scorpion Grass. Common in hay fields.

Myosotis versicolor—The small flowers are at first pale-yellow, afterwards blue.

Echium vulgare—Viper's Bugloss. Rare here. Occurs on the Bell Tower Hill.

GENTIANACEÆ—The Gentian Family.

Menyanthes trifoliata—Bogbean (Buckbean.) "Water Triffle." The whole plant, but especially the root, is intensely bitter.

Gentiana campestris—Field Gentian. Plentiful on the moors.

APOCYNACEÆ—The Periwinkle Family.

Vinca minor—Lesser Periwinkle. Castle Folly Wood.

OLEACEÆ—The Olive Family.

Fraxinus excelsior—Common Ash. It is indicative of a very favourable season for the farmer, should the oak come into leaf before the ash. "Fraxinus in sylvis pulcherrima, pinus in hortis"—Virg.

Ligustrum vulgare—Common Privet. Introduced.

AQUIFOLIACEÆ—The Holly Family.

Ilex Aquifolium—Common Holly. A general favourite and largely used to decorate rooms at Christmas. Although it reaches its most northerly limits in Scotland, yet it is in this country that it attains its greatest size and beauty.

ERICACEÆ—The Heath Family.

Erica cinerea—Fine-leaved Heath. "Cat Heather." On dry heaths.

Erica Tetralix — Cross-leaved Heath. "Bog Heather." Were a botanist requested to name some one Natural Order as pre-eminent for beauty, it is probable he would select this one.

Calluna vulgaris—Common Ling. "True Heather." Plentiful on every moor. There is only one species in this genus.

Arctostaphylos Uva-ursi — Bearberry. The fruit is known as "Gnashacks" in Nairnshire.

VACCINIACEÆ—The Bilberry or Cranberry Family.

Vaccinium myrtillus—Bilberry. The "Blaeberry" of Scotland.

Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa—Cowberry. As the true Cranberry (Oxycoccus) does not occur in Nairnshire, this is the fruit invariably known by that name.

CAMPANULACEÆ—The Campanulate Family.

Campanula rotundifolia—The Nodding-flowered Harebell. This is the "Blue Bell" of Scotland. The white flowered variety is to be met with in Ardclach.

COMPOSITÆ—The Composite Family.

Carduus lanceolatus—Spear Thistle. Bur Thistle. The true "Scotch Thistle."

Carduus arvensis—Field Thistle. A troublesome weed to the farmer.

Carduus palustris — Marsh Thistle. Various shades — purple-red, cream coloured, or almost white.

Carduus heterophyllus—Melancholy Thistle. Frequent on the Findhorn.

Arctium commune—Bur-dock. The "Burrs" of Nairn and Moray.

Centaurea nigra—Black Knapweed.

Centaurea Cyanus — Blue-bottle. Corn-flower. Locally "Blue Bonnets." The favourite flower of the late Kaiser William of Germany.

Achillea Millefolium—Milfoil. Yarrow.

Achillea Ptarmica—Sneezewort. It is so named from its strong odour.

Anthemis arvensis—Corn Chamomile. In gardens and fields. The wild blossoms are much more effective than the cultivated ones.

Pyrethrum inodorum—Scentless Feverfew. In Cottage gardens.

Pyrethrum Leucanthemum—Great Ox-eye Daisy. "Horse Gowans."

Chrysanthemum segetum—Corn Marigold. This is the troublesome "Guile" of Nairn and Moray.

Bellis perennis—Common Daisy. Locally "Gowans." "The gold embossed gem in a setting of silver." The daisy is almost ubiquitous.

Artemisia vulgaris—Mugwort. "Muggart Kail" of Moray.

Filago germanica—Erect Cudweed. The "Herba impia" of the early botanical writers.

Filago minima—Least Cudweed.

Gnaphalium rectum—Upright Cudweed.

Antennaria dioica—Mountain Cudweed. This plant is very nearly allied to the Edelweiss (Leontopodium Alpinum) or Swiss Bridal Flower. The Pes Cati of the older herbalists.

Solidago Virga-aurea—Golden-rod. Frequent.

Senecio vulgaris—Groundsel. The "Grunny Swally" of Moray. It is in flower nearly the whole year.

Senecio sylvaticus—Wood Groundsel. Dry banks on the Findhorn.

Senecio Jacobæa—Ragweed Locally known as "Stinking Willie."

Tussilago Farfara—Common Colt's-foot Occasional.

Lapsana communis—Nipplewort. A weed, and a common viatical plant.

Oporinia autumnalis—Autumnal Hawkbit.

Leontodon Taraxacum — Dandelion. Root valuable in medicine. Sometimes known as "Horse Gowans."

Sonchus oleraceus—Sow-Thistle. Occasional. An almost universal plant.

Crepis paludosa—Marsh Crepis.

Crepis virens—Smooth Hawk's-beard A very common weed among hay.

Hieracium Pilosella—Mouse-ear Hawkweed.

Hieracium murorum—Mural Hawkweed.

Hieracium cæsium—Bluish-grey Hawkweed.

Hieracium paludosum—Succory-leaved Hawkweed. Ferness.

Hieracium vulgatum—Common Hawkweed.

Hieracium boreale—Broad-leaved Hawkweed.

DIPSACEÆ—The Scabious or Teasel Family

Scabiosa succisa—Devil's-bit Scabious. The flowers are dark violet varying to flesh-colour and almost white. In cultivation it becomes more branched than in a wild state.

VALERIANACEÆ—The Valerian Family

Valeriana officinalis—Common Valerian. The root has a very strong smell. The plant is attractive to cats, and rat-catchers use it to decoy their victims.

RUBIACEÆ—The Madder Family.

Sherardia arvensis—Field Madder.

Asperula odorata—Scented Woodruff. The whole plant is remarkable for its fragrance when dried, and retains its scent for several years

Galium verum—Yellow Lady's Bed-Straw.

Galium saxatile—Mountain Bed-Straw. Heaths, very common.

Galium palustre—Marsh Goose-Grass. Watery places, not unfrequent.

Galium Aparine—Goose-Grass. "Cleavers." The "Bleedy Tongues" of Moray and Nairn. The witty Greeks of old named these plants "Philanthropos" from the persistency with which their fruits clung to human garments.

Galium boreale—Cross-leaved Bed-Straw. I discovered this plant on the 21st September, 1885, near Lord Cawdor's suspension bridge at Banchor. This is the only habitat known in Nairnshire. Specimen in my Herbarium.

CAPRIFOLIACEÆ—The Honeysuckle Family.

Sambucus nigra—Common Elder. Generally near dwelling houses.

Lonicera Periclymenum—Common Honeysuckle. Woodbine. It seems to have a "perceptive power." When the branches shoot out and come in contact with a suitable support they twine round it from right to left. If, however, two honeysuckle branches meet, they twine in opposite directions—the one to the right and the other to the left. On the banks of the Findhorn.

Linnæa borealis—Two-flowered Linnæa. I discovered a bed of this plant in the Dulsie Fir Wood near Daltra on the 28th June, 1890 Dried specimen in my Herbarium. This is the only station in Nairnshire since 1830, when a plant was found by the late W. A. Stables in Cawdor Wood.

ARALIACEÆ—The Ivy Family.

Hedera Helix—Common Ivy. On the rocks of the Findhorn and old walls. As it flowers late in Autumn, the umbels are much resorted to by bees and flies when little other food is to be had.

GROSSULARIACEÆ—The Gooseberry and Currant Family.

Ribes Grossularia—Gooseberry. Although it frequently occurs wild in the woods, it is doubtful whether this plant is truly indigenous to the country. The fruit is vulgarly called a "Grosset." The common name may be a corruption of "gorseberry."

Ribes rubrum—Red Currant. Usually cultivated.

Ribes nigrum—Black Currant. Gardens. The leaves have a peculiarly strong smell which is very characteristic. The whole plant is aromatic.

Ribes sanguineum—The Bloody or Red-Flowered Currant. This is the most ornamental species of the genus, and flowers early.

SAXIFRAGACEÆ—The Saxifrage Family.

Chrysosplenium oppositifolium—Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage.

Saxifraga stellaris—Starry Saxifrage—Occasional on the moist rocks along the Findhorn.

Saxifraga aizoides—Yellow Mountain Saxifrage. Generally a rare plant, but frequent in the same situations as the former.

UMBELLIFERÆ—The Umbelliferous Family.

Hydrocotyle vulgaris—Common White-rot. Flowers rarely developed.

Sanicula Europæa—Wood Sanicle. Frequent.

Ægopodium Podagraria—Gout Weed. "Bishop Weed."

Carum carui—Caraway. Free Church. An escape from cultivation, and can only be regarded as a naturalised plant.

Bunium flexuosum—Earth-Nut. Pig-Nut. "Knotty Meal." "Cronies." It has an aromatic sweet taste, and pigs are very fond of rooting it up. The tuberous roots are sometimes as large as a hen's egg.

Angelica sylvestris—Wild Angelica. Frequent by the water courses.

Heracleum Sphondylium—Cow Parsnip.

Anthriscus sylvestris—Wild Chervil. The flower has little or no calyx. Abundaut on the island of Lochindorbh.

Myrrhis odorato—Cicely or Great Chervil. The odour of the whole plant is highly aromatic.

ONAGRACEÆ—The Evening Primrose Family.

Epilobium angustifolium—French Willow-Herb. On the rock walk below the Parish Church. The flowers have blue pollen.

Epilobium montanum — Mountain Willow-Herb. Dry uplands. Common.

Epilobium palustre — Marsh Willow-Herb. Ferness. In sluggish streams.

Circœa lutetiana—Enchanter's Nightshade. The supposed properties which gave rise to this name are purely imaginary. Daltra.

POMACEÆ—The Apple-Tree Family.

Cratægus Oxyacantha—Common Hawthorn. "Chaws" of Moray.

Pyrus Malus—Apple-tree. Crab-tree. Cultivated.

Sorbus Aucuparia—Rowan-tree. Mountain Ash. "Roddan Tree." From a remote period the tree has enjoyed a distinguished reputation as a charm against witchcraft and other evil influences.

AMYGDALACEÆ—The Almond Family

Prunus spinosa—Sloe-tree. The original of several domestic fruits.

Prunus padus—Bird Cherry. Plentiful on the Findhorn. "Hagberry."

Prunus Juliana—Gean.

Prunus Cerasus—Cherry. Cultivated.

ROSACEÆ—The Rose Family.

Spiræa Ulmaria—Meadow-sweet. The specific name is said to be derived from "ulmus"—"Quod non inter ulmos crescit!"

Spiræa Filipendula—Dropwort. Rare.

Potentilla Tormentilla—Tormentil. Common on heathy places.

Potentilla anserina—Silverweed. The "Mascorns" of Moray. Frequent.

Potentilla Comarum—Purple Marsh Cinquefoil. In boggy places. Occasional.

Fragaria vesca—Strawberry. Common along the river banks. It produces many of the varieties cultivated in gardens.

Rubus idæus—Raspberry. This is a somewhat difficult genus.

Rubus discolor—Two-coloured-leaved Bramble. Valued for preserves.

Rubus saxatilis—Rock Bramble. Locally known as "Dog Berries."

Rubus Chamœmorus—Cloud or Roebuck-berry. The "Aiverns" of Moray. Occurs sparingly on Carn Glas, The Southern summit of Nairn.

Geum urbanum—Herb Bennet, or Common Avens. Moist shady places.

Geum rivale—Water Avens. Grassy places along the Findhorn.

Rosa canina—Dog-Rose. Flowers in three shades—pink, pale rose, and almost white. This is the species used for making conserve of roses.

Rosa rubiginosa—Eglantine or Sweet-Briar. Confined to gardens here.

Rosa spinosissima—Burnet-leaved Rose. Achagour, Cairnglass. Rare.

Alchemilla vulgaris—Common Lady's Mantle. It is seldom, if ever, eaten by cattle.

Alchemilla alpina—Alpine Lady's Mantle. An Arctic species, so modified as to bear the greater warmth of Britain. Frequent in the higher elevations.

CRASSULACEÆ—The House-Leek Family.

Sempervivum tectorum—House-Leek. Jupiter's Beard. The "Fous" of Scotland, celebrated as a popular cure for "corns." Brand says, "It was planted on cottage roofs as a defence against thunder and lighting." Charlemange's edict was:—"Et habeat quisque supra domum suum Jovis barbam."

ILLECEBRACEÆ—The Knot-Grass Family.

Scleranthus annuus—Annual Knawel. This uninteresting weed is of no known use, and occurs in barren sandy places.

PORTULACEÆ—The Water Purslane Family.

Montia fontana—Water Blinks. Water Chickweed. There is but one species in the genus, and may be found flourishing around almost every mountain spring to an elevation of over 3000 feet.

LEGUMINIFERÆ—The Pea and Bean Family.

Cytisus laburnum — Common Laburnum. Its seeds are highly poisonous. Hares and rabbits are very fond of it, and yet escape without serious results.

Sarothamnus scoparius—Common Broom. A white variety is occasionally to be met with here.

Genista anglica—Petty Whin. The "Planta Genista" was the badge of a long line of English kings from Henry II. Plentiful on damp moors. It is the "Carline's spurs" of Moray and Nairn.

Ulex Europæus—Gorse. Whin. "Love is out of season when the furze is out of blossom." This applies only to mild winters in Ardclach.

Ononis arvensis—Rest-harrow. Known as "Wild Liquorice" in Nairn.

Anthyllis vulneraria—Common Lady's Finger. "Cats' claws" of Moray.

Lotus corniculatus—Common Bird's-foot Trefoil. An ornamental viatical plant.

Melilotus vulgaris—White Melilot. A fine specimen was found in July, 1891, near Nairn by Dr Sclanders. It is now in my Herbarium.

Trifolium procumbens—Hop Trefoil.

Trifolium pratense—Purple Clover. Pasture. Very Common.

Vicia sativa—Common Vetch. Locally called "Fitchacks."

Vicia lathyroides—Spring Vetch. Not common.

Vicia sepium—Bush Vetch. Grassy places along the Findhorn.

Vicia cracca—Tufted Vetch. The "Mice Pease" of Moray and Nairn.

Vicia hirsuta—Hairy-podded Tare. Near the Parish Church.

Vicia angustifolia—Var.

Lathyrus pratensis—Meadow Vetchling. An ornamental plant.

Lathyrus macrorhizus—Heath Pea. Vulgarly called "Gnapperts."

VIOLACEÆ—The Violet Family.

Viola palustris—Marsh Violet. In turfy bogs, Glenferness.

Viola canina—Dog's Violet. The light blue flowers are scentless.

Viola lutea—Yellow Mountain Violet. The Purple and Yellow varieties occur abundantly in Ardclach.

Viola arvensis—Var. a. In fields and gardens. Petals rarely tinged with violet.

CRUCIFERÆ—The Cruciferous Family

Cardamine sylvatica—Wood Bitter Cress.

Cardamine hirsuta—Hairy Marsh Bitter Cress. If the ripe leaves be laid on moist soil, they will put out buds and produce new plants.

Cardamine pratensis—Lady's Smock. "Cuckoo-Flower."

Nasturtium officinale—Water Cress. It is a native of rivulets throughout the world, and, as a salad, has a warm agreeable flavour.

Sisymbrium thalianum—Wall Cress. Sandy fields.

Sisymbrium officinale—Officinal Hedge Mustard. The whole plant is hot and acrid. Rare in Ardclach.

Brassica Napus—Rape or Cole-seed. "Lochindorbh Kale." Till recently it was abundant among the ruins of the old Castle.

Sinapis arvensis—Wild Mustard. Charlock. Common in fields.

Draba verna—Common Whitlow-grass. In Spring, it ornaments dry spots and old walls before other flowers make their appearance.

Capsella Bursa-pastoris—Shepherd's-purse. The "Witches' Pouches" of Moray. As a weed, it follows man, and springs up wherever he fixes his abode.

FUMARIACEÆ—The Fumitory Family.

Corydalis claviculata—White-flowered Fumitory. Rare in this parish.

Fumaria officinalis—Common Fumitory. Fields and gardens.

PAPAVERACEÆ—The Poppy Family.

Papaver dubium—Smooth-headed Poppy. The "Blavers" of Moray.

NYMPHÆACEÆ—The Water Lily Family.

Nymphæa alba—White Water Lily. One of the noblest of British plants. Plentiful in the Loch of Belivat.

DROSERACEÆ—The Sundew Family.

Parnassia palustris—Grass of Parnassus. The name is derived from the myth that it first appeared on Mount Parnassus, the home of Grace and Beauty. Burn of Aitnoch.

Drosera rotundifolia — Round-leaved Sundew. Plentiful on boggy heaths. Catches insects and uses them for food.

Drosera intermedia—Narrow-leaved Sundew. Findhorn, Levrattich bend on the river.

HYPERICACEÆ—The Tutsan Family.

Hypéricum perforatum—Perforated St. John's-wort. Frequent.

PYROLACEÆ—The Winter-Green Family.

Pyrola rotundifolia — Larger Winter-Green. Though common in Ardclach, this is generally a rare plant.

ACERACEÆ—The Maple Family.

Acer Pseudo-platanus—Sycamore. Introduced.

POLYGALACEÆ—The Milkwort Family.

Polygala vulgaris—Common Milkwort. It occurs in various shades of blue, pink, and almost white. In dry grassy places.

TILIACEÆ—The Linden or Lime Tree Family.

Tilia Europæa—Linden-tree. Planted on lawns and pleasure grounds.

MALVACEÆ—The Mallow Family.

Malva moschata—Musk Mallow. Church Brae.

GERANIACEÆ—The Geranium Family.

Geranium sylvaticum—Wood Crane's-bill. This is a very conspicuous ornament along the banks of the Findhorn.

Geranium pusillum—Small-flowered Crane's-bill. One specimen.

Geranium molle—Common Dove's-foot Crane's-bill.

Geranium Robertianum—Herb Robert. This plant has small bright crimson flowers and is readily known by its strong unpleasant smell.

OXALIDACEÆ—The Wood Sorrel Family.

Oxalis Acetosella—Wood Sorrel. The true Shamrock. On a hot sunny day the leaves are slightly irritable like the sensitive plant.

ELATINACEÆ—The Waterwort Family.

Elatine hexandra—Small Waterwort. Forms green matted patches under shallow muddy water. Ferness.

LINACEÆ—The Flax Family.

Linum catharticum—Purging Flax. Grassy places. Frequent.

CARYOPHYLLACEÆ—The Pink Family.

Silene inflata—Bladder Catch-fly. Generally abundant; occasional here.

Lychnis diurna—Red Campion. When this and the following are regarded as mere varieties they are named Lychnis dioica.

Lychnis vespertina—White Campion. Smells sweetly in the evening.

Lychnis Flos-cuculi—Ragged Robin. Frequent in marshy ground.

Lychnis Githago—Corn Cockle. Only in cultivation. The "Papple" of Nairn. Introduced among seed wheat from England, into the Garioch district in Aberdeenshire about the year 1818.

Spergula arvensis—Corn Spurrey. Yarr. A very troublesome weed which is neither useful nor ornamental.

Sagina procumbens — Procumbent Pearlwort. Old walls and dry places.

Arenaria serpyllifolia—Thyme-leaved Sandwort.

Stellaria media—Common Chickweed. The "Hen's Inheritance." Occurs everywhere, and may be found in flower almost all the year.

Stellaria Holostea—Greater Stitchwort. This is the handsomest plant of the genus.

Stellaria graminea—Grassy-leaved Stitchwort. Common on pastures and bushy places.

Stellaria uliginosa—Bog Stitchwort. Frequent in grassy ditches.

Cerastium triviale—Narrow-leaved Mouse-ear Chickweed.

Cerastium semidecandrum—Little Mouse-ear Chickweed. An early plant.

Cerastium glomeratum—Broad-leaved Mouse-ear Chickweed.

RANUNCULACEÆ—The Crow-Foot Family.

Anemone nemorosa—Wood Anemone. March. April.

Ranunculus hederaceus—Ivy-leaved Crowfoot.

Ranunculus aquatilis—Water Crowfoot. Only in the lower parts of the parish.

Ranunculus Flammula—Lesser Spearwort. The "Wil-fire" of Moray.

Ranunculus acris—Upright Meadow Crowfoot. It loses its noxious qualities when dried.

Ranunculus repens—Creeping Crowfoot. The "Sitsiccar" of Moray.

Ranunculus bulbosus—Bulbous Crowfoot. Rare here.

Ficaria ranunculoides—Common Pilewort.

Caltha palustris—Marsh Marigold. Moist Meadows.

Trollius Europæus—Mountain Globe-flower. "Lucken Gowan."

A List of the Macro-Lepidoptera found in the Parish of Ardclach.

RHOPALOCERA, OR BUTTERFLIES.

Argynnis aglaia—A few specimens appear every year on the hillsides and open woods partially covered with "Pteris aquilina." July.

Argynnis euphrosyne—Occurs in considerable numbers in the Glenferness Woods, and along the whole valley of the Findhorn. May and June.

Argynnis selene—The flight of euphrosyne is about over before selene makes its appearance, but the two insects are so much alike that the Entomologist alone is able to mark the difference. July.

Vanessa urticæ—As common as it is beautiful. It is a familiar domestic visitor, and sometimes hibernates in our rooms during the Winter. June to September.

Vanessa antiopa—The Camberwell Beauty. One specimen was found at Ferness on the 26th September, 1896, and is now in my cabinet. This insect occurs with very great irregularity even in its own habitats. Some years it may be frequent, after which it will not be seen by any one for a period of eight or ten years.

Pyrameis atalanta—Variable in its appearance in Ardclach. Several good females were taken at Ferness in September, 1884, and again in August, 1893.

Pyrameis cardui—Took several insects in the garden of the Schoolhouse at Ardclach in 1882 and 1884, but have not observed any since. The conduct of cardui is very exceptional and cosmopolitan. It seems to consider no law binding as to its appearance either in the caterpillar, chrysalis, or butterfly state.

Erebia medea—Appears in great numbers every year on the banks of the Findhorn. Forres is the most easterly station, in this district, where it has been noticed. In the South it is the rarest of the rare. July.

Epinephele janira—Generally abundant in every meadow when the grass is ready for cutting. July.

Cœnonympha davus—Occurs on the moors, but far from common.

Cœnonympha pamphilus—Frequent on the heaths and rough pastures, and ascends to the highest elevations in the parish. May be seen in every month from May to October.

Thecla rubi—Never plentiful, but may usually be met with in the woods and on the dry heaths all over the district. The two tails on the hind wings somewhat resemble antennæ. "When at rest, it keeps them moving up and down, so as to perplex an enemy with the idea that it has a watchful head behind as well as one before." The under side of the wings is green, and, when closed, are scarcely distinguishable from the young leaves of the birch and bramble on which it often rests. April to June.

Polyommatus phlœas—Common in the lower reaches of Nairnshire, but crosses the Findhorn very sparingly towards the moors. In the season there seems to be three broods of this beautiful little insect. They appear in April, June, and September.

Lycœna icarus—Frequent all over Nairnshire. The upper side of the wings is intensely azure in the males, but dingy brown, more or less glossed with lilac blue reflections, in the females. May and June.

Anthocharis cardamines — Plentiful in the valleys beyond the Southern boundaries of the parish, but rare in the lower districts. Took one male specimen on the Findhorn 23rd June, 1888. Now in my cabinet.

Pieris napi—Always abundant. May and August.

Pieris rapœ—Plentifully distributed throughout the whole country. This insect frequently crosses wide stretches of sea from continent to continent. April to August.

Pieris brassicœ—Only too common every year, and very destructive in its larval condition to the cabbage from which it derives its name. Like the foregoing relative, it is very fond of migrating from one locality to another. May to August.

Hesperia tages—Occasional on the dry moors and hill sides. The flight of this small butterfly is, indeed, brisk, but without the grace and business-like activity of the group to which it belongs and is, therefore, often popularly mistaken for a moth. May.

HETEROCERA, OR MOTHS.

Smerinthus populi—Rare. One specimen, now in my cabinet, was caught by Willie Scott, Glenferness, 5th July, 1887.

Sphinx convolvuli—Found one specimen resting on sole of our window at Ferness, 21st September, 1896.

Macroglossa stellatarum—Mrs Thomson found one specimen in our window at Ferness on 5th July, 1895.

Macroglossa bombyliformis—I caught one specimen, in fine condition, on the 25th May, 1895, at Ferness. Being a fairly common insect in the North of England, and as the food plant (Scabiosa) is plentiful in the district, it might be expected to occur in Nairnshire. Should this be the case, its presence is amply protected from observation by extraordinary powers of flight, combined with such a striking resemblance to the humble bees, Bombus fragrans et muscorum, that even to the practised eye, there is often some difficulty in distinguishing the individual species when on the wing.

Cossus ligniperda—A worn female specimen was found by Johnnie Mackenzie, Ferness, in the wood which skirts the playground on Monday, 12th July, 1897. He gave it to me and next day she laid her clutch of eggs on the drying board. That it does occur at this elevation (635 feet) is evident from the half grown larvæ (two years old) having been observed by myself feeding under the bark of birch trees, but the perfect insects are so strong on the wing that, hitherto, I have failed to take any of them.

Hepialus lupulinus—Frequent. The family are all noted for their rapid flight, and hence called Swifts. June.

Hepialus velleda—Pretty common. July.

Hepialus humuli—Abundant all over the County. For the most part the ravages of this insect are confined in Nairnshire to the roots of the nettle and burdock. During the fine Summer evenings great numbers are annually caught and devoured on the wing by the Black-headed Gulls (Larus ridibundus.)

Chelonia plantaginis—Frequent on the dry moors and in open woods. The moth flies in the hot sunshine. June.

Chelonia caja—The country people always look on this gaudy insect as a butterfly, and often send a specimen to us in the hope that they have made a great discovery. All female moths are very tenacious of life until they have laid their eggs. Indeed, unless the whole body has been completely crushed, the head and breast may be quite dead, while the abdomen continues to deposit the germs of a future generation. The caja mother is a typical example.

Arctia fuliginosa—The larvæ, which show great diversity in their colouring, from pure black to light brown, are oftener seen than the perfect insect.

Arctia menthastri—The caterpillar feeds on almost every plant, and although the moth is generally common in June, it is rare in this parish

Orgyia fascelina—Occasional on the heaths, but is nowhere plentiful. Midsummer.

Orgyia antiqua—When the eggs are laid they hatch so irregularly over a period of some seven weeks, that the caterpillar, chrysalis, and moth may be found at the same time throughout the Summer and Autumn.

Demas coryli—Occasional. The local caterpillars are usually found feeding on Betula alba. June.

Trichiura cratægi—Occasional. August and Septembor.

Bombyx rubi—Frequent on the moors, although the cabinet specimen has usually to be bred from the caterpillar. June.

Bombyx quercus—This fine insect is rather common, but from its nocturnal habits and power of flight, it is not often caught on the wing. May and June.

Saturnia carpini—Occurs pretty often on the moors. Both the perfect insect and its beautiful larva are greatly prized when discovered by the country folk. April.

GEOMETRÆ OR LOOPERS.

Rumia cratægata—Appears in great numbers throughout the Summer. The wings are of a bright sulphur yellow and the insect is admitted by everyone to be a beautiful creature. It is said that there are three broods in the year.

Venilia maculata—Almost common in the open woods along the river banks. June.

Metrocampa margaritaria—Occurs in considerable numbers in the woods among oak, birch, and elm. All the wings are of a delicate pale green, which fades in a few weeks when placed in the Entomologist's cabinet. July.

Ellopia fasciaria—Plentiful in the fir woods where the caterpillar feeds. The perfect insect soon becomes worn. June.

Selenia illunaria—Rare. April and again in July.

Selenia lunaria—Rare, as its food plant, Prunus spinosa, is not plentiful in this parish. June.

Odontopera bidentata—Sometimes only too easily captured. May.

Crocallis elinguaria—Occasional, as its favourite food plant, Lonicera periclymenum, is scarce here.

Amphydasis betnlaria—One specimen taken by Mrs Thomson among birch on the Findhorn, 15th June, 1889.

Boarmia repandata—Often rather too plentiful. June and July.

Boarmia rhomboidaria—Not so common as the last. June and July. The two Boarmiæ fly rather heavily and near the surface, but when at rest they are amply protected by their wing markings which are so much in accordance with their natural environment that they are very apt to be overlooked even by entomological eyes.

Dasydia obfuscata—In all I have only taken four specimens. July.

Ephyra punctaria—One specimen, 9th June, 1894, Ferness wood.

Ephyra pendularia—Occasional among birch trees. June.

Venusia cambricaria—Has occurred. The food plant, Pyrus aucuparia, is frequent along the Findhorn valley. June.

Acidalia remutata—Rare.

Acidalia fumata—Rather common. The caterpillar feeds on heath. June.

Acidalia aversata—Pretty frequent as well as its usual variety.

Cabera pusaria—A very prominent moth in the midsummer evenings.

Cabera exanthemaria—Ferness, 25th July, 1900.

Macaria liturata—Frequent in the Ferness fir woods.

Numeria pulveraria—One specimen at Ferness in 1886.

Fidonia atomaria—Plentiful. A Northern insect. May.

Fidonia piniaria—The males are very common in the fir woods, but the females are seldom seen. May.

Hybernia defoliaria—One specimen at the Ferness Schoolhouse by Mrs Thomson, 26th November, 1892. It is an exceedingly variable moth. In the female the wings are reduced to the merest rudiments, being perfectly useless for any purpose whatever. By no means swift of foot, a distance of twelve inches would mean quite a journey for her.

Cheimatobia brumata—Sometimes very plentiful in the cold months of November and December. The female has no effective wings and is unable to fly. Coming out at night she crawls up the stems of trees on which she deposits her eggs in great numbers. When the little caterpillars are hatched they seek out the unopened buds, burrow into them, and often do much harm to fruit trees. It is when in search of these that the bullfinch and chaffinch are blamed by the gardener for picking off and destroying his buds.

Oporabia dilutata—Frequent in a mild season. The wing markings are exceedingly changeable, and in consequence this insect has borne several names. November.

Oporabia filigrammaria—Occasional. August.

Larentia didymata—Everywhere on the wing in June.

Larentia cæsiata—Very numerous, and usually good specimens.

Larentia olivata—Generally distributed. but not common. June.

Larentia pectinitaria—The beautiful green tint on the wings is very fugitive, but if they be completely covered up when drying it helps to preserve much of their original colour. June and July.

Emmelesia alchemillata—Very plentiful, and during its season it comes out in all kinds of weather.

Emmelesia albulata—Common in open country near cultivation.

Emmelesia blandiata—The caterpillar feeds on Euphrasia officinalis.

Eupithecia centureata.

Eupithecia helveticaria.

Eupithecia castigata.

Eupithecia lariciata.

Eupithecia nanata.

Eupithecia vulgata.

Eupithecia absynthiata.

Eupithecia minutata.

Eupithecia rectangulata.

Lobophora lobulata—This species is occasionally of a pretty green tint when fresh from its chrysalis. April.

Thera juniperata—Scarcely frequent. October.

Thera simulata - Occasional. April and May.

Thera obeliscata—Occurs in fir woods. Summer months.

Ypsipetes ruberata—Common.

Ypsipetes impluviata—Occasional. May.

Ypsipetes elutata—Common. This is an exceedingly variable moth. July.

Melanthia ocellata—A very beautiful insect, and usually in good condition. Common. June.

Melanippe subtristata—Frequent. Double brooded. It flies both by day and night. May and July.

Melanippe montanata—The normal type is not always constant. It is a pretty species but too common to be generally admired, and flies both by day and night throughout the Summer.

Melanippe fluctuata—A common garden moth. Summer months.

Anticlea badiata—Occasional. It derives its name from the beauty of its colouring. April.

Anticlea derivata—Rare. Willie Scott, Glenferness, one 3rd May, 1887.

Coremia munitata—A Northern insect, plentiful in this district. June.

Coremia ferrugata—Frequent. It is double brooded. May and August.

Camptogramma bilineata—Common everywhere throughout the Summer. The degree of colouring differs considerably.

Cidaria psittacata—Occasional during a mild Autumn.

Cidaria miata—A few specimens usually turn up every season. October.

Cidaria corylata—Occasional, with its rarer variety, Cidaria albo-crenata.

Cidaria russata, vel truncata, with its pretty yellow marked variety. Cidaria comma-notata. The typical species is very common. May and August.

Cidaria immanata—Abundant with its less frequent variety, Cidaria marmorata, in which the median area of the fore wings is grayish-white. When the typical insect is at rest on the bark of a fir tree, it is scarcely possible, without some wing motion, to detect its presence. July.

Cidaria suffumata—Frequent. May.

Cidaria silaceata—Occasional. The wing markings differ very considerably, but withal it is a beautiful insect. May.

Cidaria ribesiaria—Occasional. June and July.

Cidaria testata—Very plentiful on the moors. July.

Cidaria populata—Common. July.

Cidaria fulvata—A pretty little moth. Frequent. July.

Eubolia mensuraria—Frequent, and may often be found flying in the hot sunshine. June and July.

Eubolia palumbaria—Less commonly met with on the east side of the Findhorn.

Carsia imbutata—A very local insect. It occurs on the heath near the Loch of Belivat. As the reputed food plant, Cranberry (Vaccinium oxycoccos), does not grow in Ardclach, nor even in Nairnshire, the caterpillar must thrive on some other wilding.

Anaitis plagiata—Frequent in the Glenferness district. This is a double brooded species, appearing in June and September.

Chesias spartiata—The upper surface of the fore wings is glossed with a rich silky sheen. Plentiful where its food plant, Spartium scoparium, occurs on the west bank of the river Findhorn. September.

Chesias obliquaria—Occasional in the same habitats as the foregoing species. May and June.

Tanagra chœrophyllata—Common on the "haughs" along the river where the caterpillar feeds on the blossoms of the Earth Nut, Bunium flexuosum. The moth appears in July.

PSEUDO-BOMBYCES VEL CUSPIDATES.

Platypteryx lacertula—A scarce insect here, although its favourite birch is general in the parish. June.

Platypteryx falcula—Occasional. May and August.

Dicranura vinula—In Ardclach the caterpillars sometimes almost denude the Populus tremula. One larva found by Professor Burton, Keppernach, at the river on 29th July, 1889, came out a perfect insect in the following May, and is now in my cabinet. The caterpillar is a curious example of grotesque shape and beautiful colouring.

Pygœra bucephala—Occurs in Nairnshire near the borders of this parish.

NOCTUÆ VEL NOCTUAS.

Thyatira batis—The lovely pink colour on the four large wing spots is very liable to fade unless the insect be kept in the dark.

Cymatophora duplaris—Occasional in the lower reaches of the parish. The body is rather like that of a Geometer. June.

Cymatophora flavicornis—An early moth but rare here. March.

Acronycta psi. Frequent. June.

Acronycta leporina—This insect is always considered a rarity. One specimen in Dulsie wood by Mrs Thomson, June, 1884.

Acronycta megacephala—Occasional. June.

Acronycta rumicis—Pretty often found at sugar. June.

Acronycta myricae—Almost plentiful in this district. June.

Leucania conigera—The larvæ feed chiefly on the farmer's plague, known as couch grass, Triticum repens. July.

Leucania lithargyria—A very beautiful moth, the delicate tints being so wonderfully blended. July.

Leucania pallens—Frequent. June, July, and August.

Hydrœcia nictitans—Common. It flies by day and night and may often be found at rest on wild flowers. A few specimens, with little or no trace of white in the reniform, occur in Nairnshire.

Hydrœcia micacea—These insects appear to emerge from their chrysales throughout the Autumn months.

Xylophasia rurea—Common. June.

Xylophasia polydon—A very dark variety is frequently met with here.

Neuria saponariæ—A moth of great beauty. One specimen in Ferness Schoolhouse, 12th July, 1900.

Charœas graminis—Although the perfect insect may be seen frequently enough on the flowers of "Senecio Jacobœa," the caterpillars do not bear among us their usual reputation of incorrigible evil-doers.

Luperina testacea—This insect appears to do little or no harm here.

Mamestra brassicæ—In the garden the larvæ often do considerable damage, and, despite the vigilant eyes of the cook, are frequently found on the dinner table among their favourite cabbage.

Apamea basilinea—Although the caterpillars are very destructive among the wheat fields in the South, they do very little harm in this district.

Apamea gemina—Frequent. The shades of colouring are so inconstant that the varieties are sometimes mistaken even by Entomologists for different species.

Apamea oculea—It would be a hopeless task to describe every individual of this protean insect.

Miana fasciuncula—Usually found flying over hay fields, but never plentiful. June.

Caradrina cubicularis—A rather familiar inmate in most houses.

Rusina tenebrosa—Fond of sugar. June.

Agrotis valligera—This variable moth occurs sparingly here.

Agrotis exclamationis—The caterpillar is an agricultural pest.

Agrotis nigricans—The larvæ are scarcely less troublesome than the foregoing. July.

Agrotis tritici—Frequent at bramble blossoms. July.

Agrotis porphyrea—Occurs almost plentiful among heath.

Agrotis præcox—Occasional during the Autumn months. It resists the influence of chloroform in a high degree.

Agrotis pyrophila—Rather local and never common. July.

Tryphœna ianthina—The wing colouring is very rich and less liable to vary than in any other species of the genus.

Tryphœna orbona—Frequent. July.

Tryphœna pronuba—This large insect is common everywhere.

Noctua glareosa—It comes freely to light, and may be often taken on the flowers of "Senecio Jacobœa" at night.

Noctua depuncta—This moth is rather local and rare. July.

Notcua augur—Common. July.

Noctua plecta—Common. July.

Noctua C. nigrum—A double brooded species. May and September.

Noctua triangulnm—Rare in this district. June.

Noctua brunnea—May be taken freely in July.

Noctua festiva—The endless varieties of this moth have given me much trouble in identification. July.

Noctua dahlii—This is a sylvan species and easily caught. July.

Noctua rubi—Common. A double brooded insect. May and August.

Noctua umbrosa—Occasional. August.

Noctua baja—Frequent. July.

Noctua xanthographa—Large numbers may always be take at sugar. July and August.

Trachea piniperda—Found only in pine plantations. April.

Tœniocampa gothica—This moth occurs on the sallow catkins in March and April.

Tœniocampa instabilis—A very variable insect. Not common. April.

Anchocelis rufina—Occasional, as its food plant, Quercus robur, is not plentiful in the parish. September.

Anchocelis litura—Comes freely to sugar. September.

Scopelosoma satellitia—Rare in Ardclach so far as our experience goes. October.

Xanthia cerago—Occasional. September.

Xanthia silago—This species has a brighter yellowish hue than its foregoing relative. They appear to be widely distributed though never plentiful. September.

Euperia fulvago—Two specimens were found at Ferness—16th August, 1889, and August, 1895. A very local insect.

Cosmia trapezina—The food plant "Quercus robur," is scarce here.

Dianthœcia cucubali—Occasional. June.

Polia chi—It is decidedly local, but a season seldom passes in this parish without a few specimens being captured. July to September.

Epunda lutulenta—Rather scarce. September.

Epunda nigra—Frequent, though it seems to be local in its appearances. Comes freely to light. October.

Epunda viminalis—One specimen at the Schoolhouse, Ferness, 15th August, 1893.

Miselia oxyacanthæ—Occasional. September.

Phlogophora meticulosa—Double brooded and generally common, but I have taken only a few specimens.

Euplexia lucipara—Not very plentiful in Ardclach. July.

Aplecta herbida—Rather an uncommon species here. One was taken at sugar 10th July, 1896.

Aplecta nebulosa—Rare in Ardclach.

Hadena adusta—Frequent and widely distributed.

Hadena glauca—This is a Northern insect and fairly abundant.

Hadena dentina—Occurs generally throughout Nairnshire.

Hadena suasa—One specimen at sugar June, 1896. I believe this capture is the first in the North of Scotland. It is now in my cabinet.

Hadena oleracea—Common in this district.

Hadena thalassina—Occasional.

Hadena rectilinea—This is a beautiful insect and appears to be a Northern species, not being found farther South than Yorkshire.

Cloantha solidaginis—I found two specimens at Ferness on Rag Weed, 14th August, 1895. It is an exceedingly local insect, and so far as known to me, is new to the North of Scotland.

Calocampa exoleta—Although this is a moth universally distributed in Great Britain, I possess only one specimen taken at Ferness 24th October, 1887.

Cucullia umbratica—In this district it comes freely to the flowers of Lychnis vespertina.

Anarta cordigera—One specimen taken on the moor of Aitnoch, Glenferness, by Willie Scott, Drummore, 26th May, 1885. It is now in my cabinet. Newman, in his "British Moths" states, that so far as Great Britain is concerned, it has only been taken at Rannoch in Perthshire.

Anarta myrtilli—Took one moth in Ferness Wood on the 20th June, 1891, and another in the Schoolhouse Garden on the 9th May, 1893.

Brephos parthenias—Occasional in the early Spring.

Abrostola urticæ—Very plentiful about its food plant, Urtica dioica.

Plusia chrysitis—Occasional.

Plusia bractea—Rare.

Plusia festucæ—Occasional.

Plusia iota—Rare.

Plusia pulchrina—Rare.

Plusia gamma—This destructive insect seldom causes much damage here. It may be met with from Spring to Autumn, and often ascends our highest hills.

Plusia interrogationis—Rare.

Amphipyra tragopogonis—Common.

Not having been able to give much attention to the remaining tribes of the Micro-Lepidoptera we trust it may be considered sufficient to simply enumerate, "in cumulo," the few species, which, from time to time, have been observed within the district. Judging, however, by the numbers in the foregoing lists it might reasonably be concluded that the local field would amply reward the search of the diligent Entomologist in this difficult branch of Natural Science.

Hypena proboscidalis. Aglossa pinguinalis ; Pyrausta purpuralis ; Ennychia cingulalis ; Hydrocampa nymphæata ; Botys fuscalis ; Pionea forficalis ; Scopula lutealis ; Eudorea murana, Eudorea lineola ; Aphomia colonella ; Crambus pratellus, Crambus hortuellus, Crambus culmullus, Crambus tristellus, Crambus pinetellus ; Chlœphora prasinana. Tortrix adjunctana, Tortrix ribeana, Tortrix corylana, Tortrix unifasciana ; Halonota scutulana. Peronea variegana ; Sericoris lacunana ; Mixodia schulziana, Mixodia palustrana ; Eupœcilia angustana. Tinea tapetzella ; Micropteryx purpurella, Micropteryx uniaculella, Micropteryx subpurpurella ; Swammerdamia cæsiella ; Depressaria costosa, Depressaria umbellana, Depressaria arenella, Depressaria applana ; Gelechia Huberni, Gelechia instabilella ; Pleurota bicostella ; Endrosis fenestrella ; Tinagma resplendellum ; Argyresthia conjugella ; Gracilaria semifascia, Gracilaria elongella ; Coleophora viminetella ; Chauliodus chærophyllella ; Elachista kilmunella, Elachista zonariella ; Lithocolletis vacciniella, Lithocolletis frolichiella ; Cemiostoma spartifoliella ; Alucita polydactyla.

Systematic List of Flies.

ORDER ORTHOPTERA.

Family Acrididæ.

Mecostethus grossus, Linn

ORDER NEUROPTERA.

Family Libellulidæ.

Platetrum depressum, Linn.
Cordulegaster annulatus, Latr.
Æschna grandis, Linn.
Pyrrhosoma minium, Harr.

Family Chrysopidæ.

Chrysopa vulgaris, Schn.

ORDER TRICHOPTERA.

Family Phryganidæ.

Phryganea grandis, Linn.

ORDER HYMENOPTERA.

Division Terebrantia.

Sub-Division Phytophaga.

Family Tenthredinidæ.

Trichiosoma lucorum, Linn.
Nematus ribesii, Scop.
Tenthredo maculata, Fourc.
Tenthredo mesomelas, Linn.

Sub-Division Entomophaga.

Family Cynipidæ.

Cynips Kollari, Hartig.

Family Chrysididæ.

Chrysis ignita, Linn.

Family Ichneumonidæ.

Amblyteles proteus, Christ.
Pimpla instigator, Fab.

Family Braconidæ.

Apanteles glomeratus, Linn.

Division Aculeata.

Sub-Division Hyterogyna.

Family Formicidæ.

Formica rufa, Linn.
Formica sanguinea, Latr.

Sub-Division Fossores.

Family Nyssonidæ.

Mellinus arvensis, Linn.

Sub-Division Diploptera.

Family Eumenidæ.

Odynerus parietum, Linn.

Family Vespidæ.

Vespa vulgaris, Linn.
Vespa arborea, Smith.

Sub-Division Anthophila.

Family Andrenidæ.

Colletes fodiens, Kirby.
Halictus rubicundus, Kirby.
Andrena nitida, Kirby.
Andrena trimmerana, Kirby.

Family Apidæ.

Apathus vestalis, Fourc.
Bombus muscorum, Linn.
Bombus fragrans, Pall.
Bombus lapponicus, Fab.
Bombus pratorum, Linn.
Bombus lapidarius, Lind.
Bombus terrestris, Kirby.
Apis mellifica, Linn.

ORDER HEMIPTERA.

SUB-ORDER HETEROPTERA.

Family Gerridæ.

Gerris gibbifera, Schum.

ORDER DIPTERA.

Sub-Order Orthorrhapha.

Division Nematocera.

Family Bibionidæ.

Bibio pomonæ, Fab.

Family Culicidæ.

Culex pipiens, Linn.

Family Tipulidæ.

Tipula gigantea, Schranck.

Division Brachycera.

Family Tabanidæ.

Hæmatopota pluvialis, Linn.
Therioplectes tropicus, Linn.
Tabanus bovinus, Linn.

Family Leptidæ.

Leptis scolopacea, Linn.
Leptis conspicua, Latr.

Family Asilidæ.

Laphria flava, Linn.

Family Empidæ.

Empis Aessellata, Fab.

SUB-ORDER CYCLORRHAPHA.

Division Proboscidea.

Family Syrphidæ.

Chilosia præcox, Zett.
Leucozona lucorum, Linn.
Platychirus manicatus, Mg.
Didea alneti, Fln.
Didea intermedia, Lœw.
Syrphus ribesii, Linn.
Syrphus glaucius, Linn.
Sphegina clunipes, Fln.
Rhingia rostrata, Linn.
Volucella bombylans, Linn.
Volucella pellucens, Linn.
Sericomyia borealis, Fln.
Arctophila mussitans, Fab.
Eristalis tenax, Linn.
Eristalis intricarius, Linn.
Eristalis arbustorum, Linn.
Helophilus pendulus, Linn.
Xylota segnis, Linn.
Chrysochlamys nigrifrons, Egger. (Only a variety of Chrysochlamys cuprea, Scop.)
Spilomyia fallax, Linn.
Chrysotoxum arcuatum, Linn.

Family Conopidæ.

Conops vesicularis, Linn.

Family Tachinidæ.

Echinomnia grossa, Linn.
Olivieria lateralis, Fab.

Family Sarcophagidæ.

Sarcophaga carnaria, Linn.
Cynomyia mortuorum, Linn.

Family Muscidæ.

Lucilia cæsar, Linn.
Calliphora groenlandica, Zett.
Calliphora erythrocephala, Nig.
Calliphora vomitoria, Linn.
Pollenia vespillo, Fab.
Musca domestica, Linn.
Mesembrina meridiana, Linn.

Family Anthomyidæ.

Hyetodesia scutellaris, Fln.
Homalomyia canicularis, Linn.

Family Cordyluridæ.

Scatophaga stercoraria, Linn.

Family Sciomyzidæ.

Dryomyza flaveola, Fab.

Inscriptions in Churchyard of Ardclach.

The subjoined Inscriptions are of local interest:—

"Memoriæ Alexander Falconer, hujusce parochiæ preceptoris quadraginta septem annos. Viri docti probique, sacrum. Ob. A.D. 1837, Æt. 76."

"Erected in memory of Margaret Brown, beloved wife of James Riach, Teacher, who died at Fornighty, February 21st, 1870. Also the said James Riach, who died there 4th July, 1886, aged 70 years."

"Sacred to the memory of Miss Jane Gordon Mitchell, who having, after the death of her mother, devoted the last forty years of her life to the care of her brother, James Mitchell, born deaf, dumb, and blind, died universally regretted on the 14th June, 1861, aged 73 years. And also of James Errol Mitchell, who died at Nairn on 11th August, 1869, aged 73 years, much beloved, and regarded as a peculiar monument of a merciful God's protecting care."

"Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Colin Mackenzie, M A, for thirty-two years Minister of this Parish. A sincere Christian, an earnest preacher, a faithful pastor, and an honest man, distinguished for his kindness to the poor and for his love to all. Born at the Manse of Rogart, 2nd August, 1828; died at the Manse of Ardclach, 7th July, 1882. Erected in affectionate remembrance by his parishioners and friends. Also of his wife, Eliza Isabella Mackenzie, who died at Nairn, 19th November, 1884. 'Lord I believe'."

A tablet inside the Church bears the following inscription:—

"In memory of the Rev. Colin Mackenzie, for thirty-two years Minister of this Parish. Died 7th July, 1882. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' Erected by his parishioners and friends"

"In memory of the Rev. Henry Macleod, who was born in Rogart, Sutherlandshire, April 26th, 1805, and ordained and inducted as Free Church Minister of Ardclach, April 16th, 1844. A man of considerable mental vigour, a devout and consistent Christian, an agreeable companion, a wise counsellor, an edifying preacher, and a faithful pastor, laid aside from public work during the last years of his life. He died at Milton of Connage, in the Parish of Petty, 19th February, 1876."

"Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Hugh Macbean, for thirty-nine years Minister of this Parish, who died on 17th September, 1851, aged 73 years; and of Anne Fraser, his widow, who died on 23rd November, 1864, aged 72 years. Also of John, Alexina, Hugh, Alexander, and William, their children. The three last mentioned are likewise here interred."

The following is inscribed on a tablet built into the North wall of the Church :—

"This stone was placed here by Mr WILLIAM BARRON, Minister, and his wife JEAN GRANT, in memory of their children whose dust lies here under, viz., HUGH, and ten more of sons and daughters. 1766."

"This stone is placed here by JAMES BARRON, of Fort-George, in testimony of respect for the memory of his parents, the Rev. WILLIAM BARRON, Minister of Ardclach, who died in 1779, on the 62nd year of his ministry, aged 86. A pastor eminent for piety, indefatigable in the vineyard of his blessed Master, the friend of virtue, the enemy only of vice; who walked by faith and died in hope. And in memory of JEAN GRANT, his mother, who died in 1784, aged 74 years, and twelve of their children. 'I will ransome them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death'."

"Erected by the parishioners of Ardclach in testimony of esteem for the Rev. DONALD MITCHELL, their pastor, who died beloved and lamented on the 22nd June, 1811, in the 62nd year of his age and 38th of his ministry."

The following is from a tablet inside the Church :—

"Sacred to the memory of the Rev. DONALD MITCHELL. He was a zealous and edifying preacher of the Gospel, a faithful and diligent shepherd of souls, in relative duties affectionate and exemplary. This stone was erected by his parishioners in commemoration of his work and piety, and in testimony of their respect and love. His mild and blameless life and his useful labours were closed on 22nd day of June, 1811, in the 62nd of his age and the 38th of his ministry."

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